

**HUB****DIGITAL****LIVING**

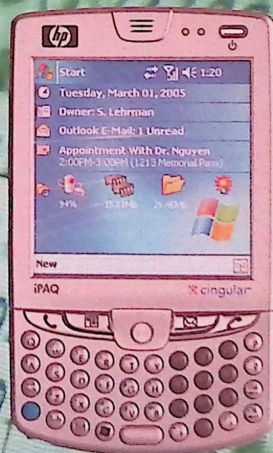
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# Editorial



<well-intentioned but empty New Years resolution> This year, I vow to not blithely accept whatever operating system is thrust upon me by some early finagling and foresight turned majority rule.</well-intentioned but

empty New Years resolution>

Sure, there's a wealth of software both free and otherwise that runs on Windows. Granted, if a device is operating system (OS) specific, it's generally designed for Windows. And sure, calling tech-support with a Linux-related question is likely to net some puzzled wonderings, culminating in a suggestion to start Googling (or perhaps MSN searching?) or reading through Linux-specific forums for the answer.

However, commercial operating systems are generally expensive.

By the time Windows Vista comes out – firm date as yet available at time of writing – there's likely an upgrade in a number of people's future.

Still, there's room to experiment, right?

I likely won't break away from Windows entirely. Any experimentation with alternate operating systems will remain just that, at least for the time being. Reason being, while many of the interoperability issues between Mac and Windows have been dealt with rendering the argument between Mac and Windows to

a discussion of which OS you personally prefer, the same can't be said for the various flavours of Linux or other operating systems.

With that in mind, I'd like to welcome you to our first issue of 2006. The theme: Alternate Computing.

There are options out there and, as we examine in the pages that follow, many of these options allow us to do the things we need to do. Still, there's something to be said for the path of least resistance.

The computer is a tool. My thinking on alternate operating systems remains; I want the most effective tool to get the job done.

Were it that I pursued another career path and had become a plumber, I wouldn't have attempted to turn the plumbing world on its ear by using 4.8 decimeter drain pipes, incorporating all manner of new-fangled pipe fittings to interface with the main city sewers. I wouldn't spend hours on each new job bending, shaping and manufacturing new pipes to work with the old plumbing.

But then again, I never was the most adventurous of pipe fitters.

Maybe in the new year ...

Enjoy the issue,  
Andrew Moore-Crispin  
Editor-in-Chief

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In selected regions and online

Working from home: Are you ready  
Porn, pixels and profit  
The mice that roared  
Moving to Mac: Finding software



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# HUB

DIGITAL LIVING

Volume 19 : Number 01

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Fax: 416-348-9553

Canadian Publication Mail,  
Sales Product Agreement #41037518. Printed in Canada.  
ISSN 1710-0143 HUB: Digital Living (B.C. ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0151 HUB: Digital Living (Calgary ed.)  
ISSN 1710-016X HUB: Digital Living (Edmonton ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0178 HUB: Digital Living (Eastern ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0186 HUB: Digital Living (Montreal ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0194 HUB: Digital Living (Prairie ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0208 HUB: Digital Living (SW Ont. ed.)  
ISSN 1710-0216 HUB: Digital Living (Toronto ed.)

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# Best of 2005: The hottest gadgets and gear of the year

If you're reading this issue of HUB: Digital Living, chances are you'll agree that technology is a wonderful thing. But with so many products flooding the marketplace, choosing one over another can be an overwhelmingly difficult task. After all, many of these tech toys can cost a pretty penny, plus there's no worse feeling than investing in something that becomes quickly outdated.

So, now that 2005 has come to a close, we thought it the perfect time to highlight some of our favourite gadgets and gear of the year.

## Best cell phone

It seems each week there's a new cell phone on the market, but the one that caught our attention earlier this year, and is now available in a sleek black finish, is the Motorola Razr V3. At just 1.39 cm thick, 5.3 cm wide and 9.8 cm long (when flipped open), it's one of the thinnest handsets on the market, yet the GSM world phone is packed with a VGA digital camera, Bluetooth connectivity for wireless headsets, and the ability to download and play MPEG-4 video clips on its large screen.

Love text messaging and Web surfing? Users will dig the smooth metallic finish and etched keypad created from a single sheet of nickel-plated copper alloy.

Motorola.ca; \$250 with 3-year Rogers Wireless plan (or \$410 without).

## Best MP3 player

Thirty million iPod owners can't be wrong. Our favourite is the 4GB iPod nano, a tiny music player (thinner than a no. 2 pencil and weighing just

1.5 ounces), that can store up to 1,000 songs or display up to 25,000 photos on its colour screen.

And because it uses Flash memory instead of a hard drive (as with the iPod mini), there are no moving parts so it's ideal for working out with.

The nano works seamlessly with the free iTunes software so you can create custom playlists or download podcasts and audio books – all with a couple of mouse clicks. The nano ships in either ultra-shiny black or white. Keeping it so shiny might prove a little difficult however.

Apple.ca; \$299 for 4GB version.

## Best digital camera

While digital SLRs (single lens reflex) cameras aren't as popular, or as affordable, as point-and-shoot digicams, it was the Canon EOS Rebel XT that took our best shots this year.

This high-performance "prosumer" camera features what the company calls its "digital trinity," an 8-megapixel CMOS sensor, Canon's proprietary DIGIC II image processor and compatibility with over 50 EF lenses.

While serious shutterbugs may turn their nose up at this camera for its lightweight plastic body, the proof is in the performance.

Canon.ca; \$1,199.

## Best game system

This is a tough one. The Sony PlayStation Portable (PSP) is a killer machine that never fails to impress, but the best gaming hardware of the year must go to the Xbox 360 – not just for what it can do today but where it'll take console gaming in the near future. This sleek white unit has some serious horsepower under the hood so it can deliver high-resolution games (720p) and 5.1 surround sound audio. It also has wireless controllers, a removable and upgradeable hard drive and a WiFi card slot to join an existing network, which will be perfect to take advantage of all the Xbox Live features.

Xbox.com/ca; \$399 for core system, \$499 for premium bundle.

## Best PC monitor

PC gamers and movie lovers, rejoice! The stunning ViewSonic VX924 Xtreme monitor is a 19-inch flat-panel LCD display with an industry-leading 3-millisecond response time, which means your computer games and DVD flicks won't suffer from the common "ghost" trails caused by fast motion (by comparison, many PC monitors sport between 12 and 16 millisecond response times).

The display (with 1280 x 1024 native resolution) also boasts a slew of analog and digital connection options and a sleek "floating" body design.

Viewsonic.com; \$499.99.



By Marc Saltzman



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# Untethered: WiFi to the MAX

## WiMAX hopes to bring broadband to rural communities and developing markets

When humankind expanded from occupying the ground to taking up the airwaves, there was a paradigm shift in the way things were done.

Information was as close and accessible as the nearest radio and later, television would share the airspace bringing images to accompany the voices.

Today, wireless is often perceived as the way to go with wireless networks at home and in the office, cordless and cellular phones, Bluetooth and other wireless device-to-device connection methods.

WiMAX is one standard for wide reaching wireless Internet access that hopes to extend connectivity beyond the limited range of existing WiFi (802.11a/b/g) technology.

While direct access to WiMAX signals by end-users is a way off, the standard is getting attention as a possible solution for rural communities as a "last mile" link to the rest of the world.

## A new standard?

Fredericton, New Brunswick was the first Canadian city to offer publicly funded blanket wireless Internet access to area business, residents and visitors.

In places like Texas, the debate is ongoing as to whether public WiFi is a fair government offering in a market economy (how are private ISPs to compete with "free" Internet access, after all) or whether it's reasonable to use tax money to fund such a project.

Fredericton used the existing and common 802.11 WiFi standard, with a range of only a few hundred feet and a lower effective throughput, this would require a great many repeaters and nodes to truly blanket even a small city.

Today, we're staring down the barrel of a potential new standard in wireless broadband Internet access. It's called WiMAX (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access) and as the acronymic name suggests, it's WiFi to the next level.

Wireless standard 802.16, in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE, [www.ieee.org](http://www.ieee.org)) book of codes and standards pushes

the range of wireless Internet access exponentially, making it a potential solution for rural communities where broadband access is often not available.

Leveraging existing infrastructure, a WiMAX station can be installed on a TV or radio tower or other high point on the landscape.

Here's where things get interesting.

With line-of-sight to the structure housing the WiMAX station, houses can pull in a strong signal from up to 50 km away, proponents say. Without line-of-sight, the range is diminished. However, the true range of WiMAX has yet to be practically tested in real-world scenarios.

The Associated Press recently spoke of a remote village school outside Buenos Aires where chugging dial-up connections were replaced with broadband-speed WiMAX access in a carefully scripted media event, driving home the potential benefit to remote communities and schools.

The technology allows for a shared bandwidth of 70 Mbit/sec that, according to WiMAX cheerleaders, is enough to offer traditional broadband speed to over a thousand home users.

## Up in the air?

Whether WiMAX will – or even has the potential to – displace the current duopoly of broadband access (cable and direct subscriber line (DSL)) is much debated. For now at least, the focus is on the rural area angle where the only real options are costly satellite access with sometimes-unbearable uplink latency or excruciatingly slow dial-up access.

As WiMAX rolls out, the first products will likely be aimed at business and government applications, though consumer applications are expected to come on the tail.

Wireless metropolitan area networks (WMAN) where users can roam around the city with full WiMAX coverage, accessing the Internet and web services at will might sound like something of a pipe dream but are not entirely far-fetched.

Currently, there are a few cities testing WiMAX coverage within their borders. Notably, the city council for Brighton in the UK is running a pilot program in collaboration Sussex University and local company Metranet, the eGov Monitor ([www.egovmonitor.com](http://www.egovmonitor.com)) reports.

The idea is to give students and schools always-on access to the Net, blanketing 90 per cent of the city in WiMAX coverage while simultaneously laying the infrastructure to communicate cheaply and effectively with city employees in the field.

Intel is a major supporter of WiMAX, stating that we'll start to see notebooks incorporating the technology in 2006.

WiMAX does not spell the end of WiFi, however. The two standards are in fact complementary. A coffee shop offering wireless Internet access to customers could, for example, install a WiMAX receiver station that would then route to an existing 802.11a/b/g station to allow customers to connect in the usual way using existing technology.

Will we be walking around major cities, blanketed in always-on wireless similar to cell phone coverage? Time will tell, but with the current popularity of VoIP and the recent release of wireless VoIP handsets, it seems consumers are ready now.

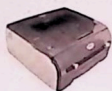
By Andrew Moore-Crispin







I am a master in the art of negotiation,  
even with my 13-year-old son James.



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# Work Smarter: Office templates

There's a lot to do when establishing a home office, and anything that helps get things done more quickly or efficiently is a big plus. Enter Microsoft Office templates. These are documents created in programs like Word and Excel that have layout, settings and text already in place. All you do is type the changeable text and values, save, and print. Templates save you typing the same text repeatedly and they ensure accuracy – if your address is in a template, you don't have to check it every time.

## Making a letterhead

To make a letterhead template for personal or business correspondence, start with a new Word document. Choose View > Header and Footer, and place the elements for your letterhead in the header and footer areas. For example, put your logo in the top centre of the page and your address across the bottom, or put everything in either the header or footer. Choose a font that you don't regularly use to type with, and your letterhead will look custom printed.

To return to your document, click the Close button on the Header and Footer toolbar. Add anything to the letter that you normally put in all the letters you send. For example, choose Insert > Date and Time, enable the Update Automatically checkbox and choose a date format to add a date that is always current. Include a subject line and your signature, too.

I use what I call "Click here" blocks to add more functionality to my templates. To make one, click where you plan to type something later on; for example, click where the recipient's address will be. Choose Insert > Field, then from the Field names list choose MacroButton and click the Field Codes button. You will see something like: `MACROBUTTON AcceptAllChanges` in the box. Change this to read:

`MACROBUTTON nomacro [Click and type recipient's address]`

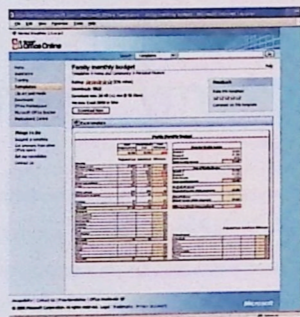
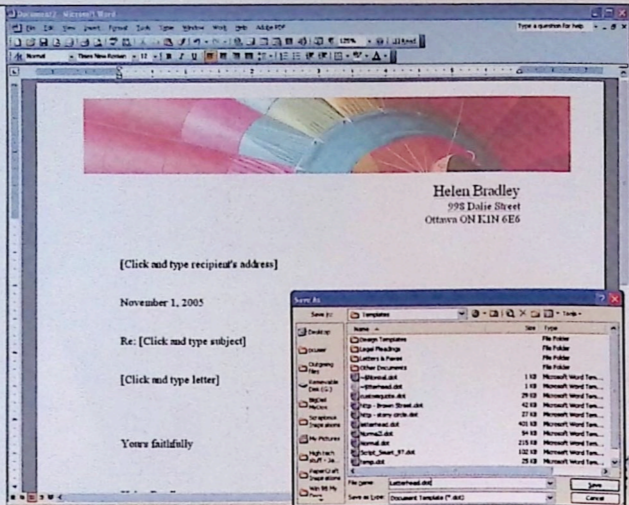
Click Ok to end. To make more "Click here" blocks, repeat the process, changing only the words in the braces (hint: they're not limited to letters and can be used in any Word document).

When your letterhead template is complete, save it by choosing File > Save As, and type a name for the document. From the "Save as type" list, choose Document Template (\*.dot) and click Ok. This places the template in your template collection. Close the file.

To use the template for a new letter, choose File > New, and from the Templates list, choose "On my computer." Select your template and click Ok. Type your letter – when you get to one of your "Click here" blocks, click on it and start typing. When the letter is complete, simply save and print it as you would any other Word document.

## Tip:

There are lots of handy templates online that you can download and open in Excel, Word and other office programs. Find them at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-ca/default.aspx>. After you download one, save it as a template (following the instructions in this column) so you always have it handy.



## Excel templates

Many of us track financial data in Excel simply because it is relatively easy to use and you can see your data – it's not hidden deep in your accounting software. When you repeatedly set up the same worksheet each week or month, save time by creating a template worksheet. Start with an

existing version of the worksheet and remove all the data that is unique to that month. Leave in place all the data that is the same every month, and the formulas that make the calculations.

To protect the template so you can only edit cells that should be altered, select the cells that you plan to enter data into and choose Format > Cells > Protection tab, and also disable the Locked checkbox. Repeat until all the desired cells are unlocked. To protect the remaining cells, choose Tools > Protection > Protect Sheet and click "Ok". Avoid password-protecting the sheet unless someone else will be using it.

To save your worksheet template, choose File > Save As and type a name for the template. From the "Save as type" list choose Template (\*.xlt) and click Save.

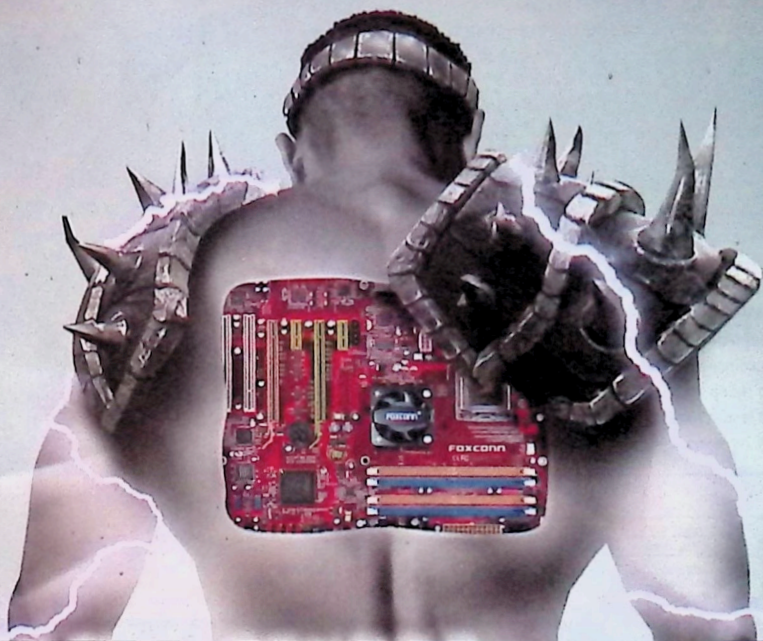
When you need to start a new sheet to record your data, open your template by choosing File > New from the Templates section, choose On My Computer. Locate your template, click "Ok" to open it, and start working. Save and print the worksheet as you would any regular Excel worksheet.

By Helen Bradley



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# Digital Photography Tutorial 21

## Showing off your holiday snaps

What to do with all those holiday snaps! Prints are a tried and true solution, but the digital variation of the 35mm slide show is a popular alternative. There are many ways to build one.

Image organizers and image editors usually include the ability to create a slide show. You can buy software that is dedicated to the task, or use general-purpose presentation tools like Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft PowerPoint. You can also use video editing software to create a movie made entirely of stills, or mix stills with video.

All of these will do the basic job of organizing a number of images into a sequence. Some now include the ability to pan across a still image, giving the illusion of motion (often called the Ken Burns effect). They will allow you to add text slides for titles, vary the time that images stay onscreen and provide transition effects. Some will let you include an audio sound track – a voice track for narration, a music track for accompaniment, or perhaps both.

One principle to keep in mind when building a presentation is that less is more. A fewer number of well-chosen images will have more impact (and cause less



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fidgeting in the audience, than hundreds you've thrown together without much planning. Pick for subject matter, of course, but also for aesthetic aspects like composition, colour vibrancy, and so on. Don't include several variations of the same basic shot; use just the best one or two. If you want to animate a sequence, like a child opening a gift, try shortening the timing so that images change in close to real time. "Less is more" also applies to the use of transition effects. Transition effects should serve your presentation, not compete with it by drawing attention away from your images.

Your presentation should tell a story, so image order is important. You might be tempted to show images in the order you took them, but there's no rule that says you have to do it that way. You could start at the end, with a shot of a room cluttered with opened gifts and torn gift wrap, or in the middle with the arrival of a special guest. You might place a few text slides at appropriate places in the presentation to help people follow the story you are trying to tell. Remember you are a storyteller, not a stenographer.

If you present on your own equipment, the technical details of your show won't matter. However, if you distribute the show to friends and family, you can't count on everyone having the same hardware and software that you do, so you need to make sure they can see the show with the equipment they have. Many packages will allow you to save the presentation as a DVD or videoCD movie, so people can see the show on a TV set using the DVD player. For computer playback,



you can save the presentation in Adobe Acrobat's PDF format, or use the "pack and go" feature in PowerPoint, which will allow people to see the show even if they don't happen to own that specific software.

By David Tanaka

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## Creative Digital Scrapbooking: Designing Keepsakes on Your Computer

By Katherine Murray

Peachpit Press, 2005 ISBN 0-321-26810-1

Paperback, 298 pages Price: \$31.95

Scrapbooking is huge in the U.S. alone, about one-quarter of U.S. households engage in it, according to a study by *Creative Keepsakes* magazine. If you want to get started, *Creative Digital Scrapbooking* will provide a useful overview as well as specific guidance on the various tasks involved. The book covers the major tools, including page layout, graphic design, journaling and photography. It is well designed with tip boxes, sidebars and "ask the expert" sections adding visual interest to the main text.

One potential limitation of this book is that many of the examples and techniques are based on *Just Paint Shop Pro*, Version 8. That product is now up to Version 12. For the most part, however, the information will stand on its own.



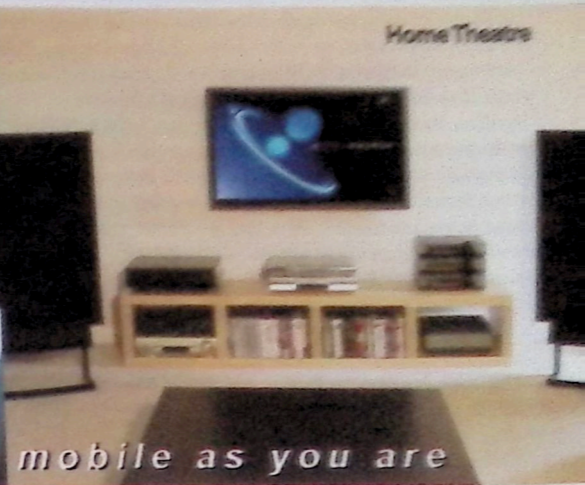




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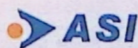
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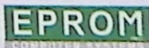
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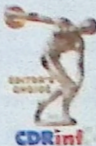
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# DV, or Not DV

## Free beer brings added responsibility

They say there is no free lunch. From what I can tell, there's little available free beer, either.

But there is free software, available for almost any application you can think of, including audio and video production and multimedia.

Based on the Linux operating system, and often called FOSS (free and/or open source software), such programs are generally distributed and available to any and all users under the GPL, or General Purpose License. Basically, it means the software can be freely used, revised or shared, as long as everything is open and above board, and any and all software revisions are shared with the user community.

Free software is not like free beer [just use and enjoy]. It's more like getting a free kitten: it comes with responsibilities, like care and feeding, as well as enjoyment.

Up until recently, there's been a lack of really solid Linux-based video editing apps, but tons in development by that user community. Literally thousands of video editing initiatives can be found on the open source project lists.

But there are just a handful of open source editing packages available now, and most do require a certain knowledge and comfort level with the underlying operating system. Knowing how Linux works will ensure that the apps running on it will work — there's that responsibility issue again.



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Cinerella, from a company called Remains Virtual, is a comprehensive content creation system for Linux, with key features for video capturing, compositing and editing. The underlying foundation for video processing is QuickTime 4 for Linux, MPEG-4, and the H.264 video codec and compression scheme. It's a high quality, multi-platform data file, so video encoded in Linux can be played on Mac or Windows machines - extremely high quality video too, including HDTV.

Cinerella features will satisfy the most demanding editor: batch capture and render, unlimited tracks, floating point compositing, and a whack of real-time audio and video effects like reverse motion, chromakey, reverb and EQ.

Kino is an entry-level DV editor, good for quick edits or rough cutting. Kino does not support multiple layers or tracks of audio and video, and so does not require as powerful hardware.

Kino (also a GNU/Linux tool) does have good compatibility with IEEE 1394 FireWire devices for capture, VTR control, and recording back to the camera. It captures video to disk in raw DV and AVI format, in both type 1 DV and type 2 DV (separate audio stream), encoding, using a nice drag-and-drop.

Also, Kino can export the composite movie in a number of formats: DV over IEEE 1394, raw DV, DV AVI, still frames, WAV, MP3, Ogg Vorbis, MPEG-1, MPEG-2, and H.264.

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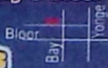
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MainConcept has strong, stable 32-bit video editing programs, available for a number of operating systems, including Windows and Linux (the 5.5 Linux version was available before the Windows one). MainActor 5.2.1 is tweaked for a certain flavour of Linux, known as Mandrake (now Mandriva) Linux 10.1, and as such, there are certain fees for ongoing support or maintenance in the package.

Nevertheless, the company's DV codec and MPEG encoder are really good, and some say are worth the price of admission all by themselves. Otherwise, the editing package itself is pretty good, with most key editing features and functions available in a well-organized user interface.

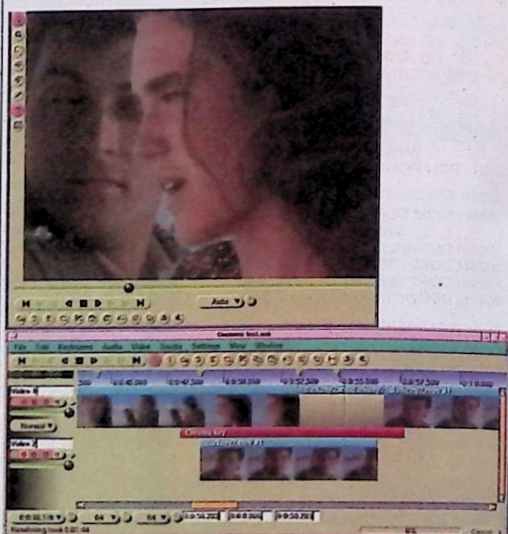
The H.264 Encoder v2 application is priced at \$499 for the Windows version, and features Baseline, Main and High Profiles for setting compression parameters. The product also includes AAC encoding and decoding.

That another new open source GPL suite of programs enables a complete home media system is no myth. But it's called MythTV, and with it the developer says you can pause, fast-forward and rewind live TV, using one or more installed video capture cards feeding multiple storage devices. Any combination of analog or digital (MPEG-2, MJPEG, DVB or HDTV) capture devices can also be used with Myth. VideoMach is called an audio/video builder, not editor, as many of its features and functions are used to build video sequences from still images. Tools for file conversion, image manipulation and output are included, and are compatible with most common digital media formats.

Ogg Vorbis, as you may know, is a new compression format altogether. On the audio side, it is comparable to MP3, VQF, AAC, and other digital audio formats – except that it is completely free, open, and not patented.

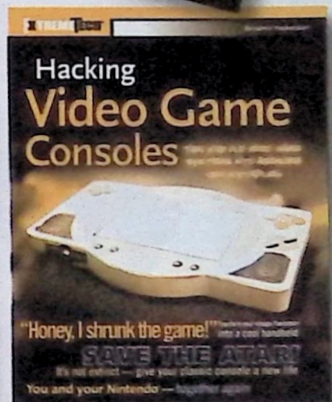
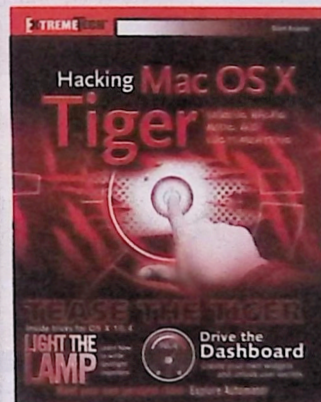
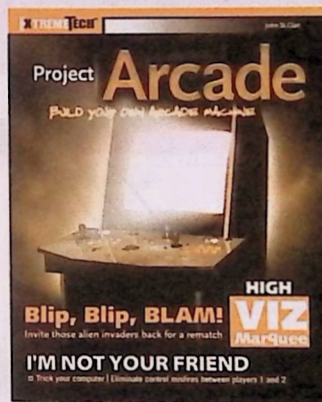
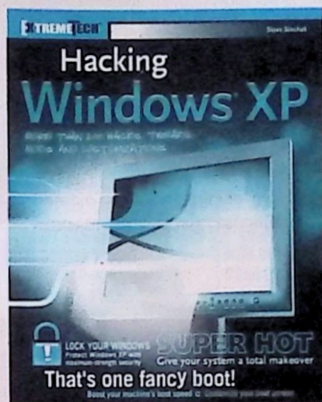
Ogg Vorbis, and sister organizations like Theora.org and Xiph.com, are working on video compression formats as well, to support video editing and DVD creation.

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Just to underscore the fact that free software may not be free, here are a couple of phrases that you won't see together that often: \$25,000 and Linux! SpectSoft's powerful RaveHD system brings high-end video

I/O system to the Linux world. It comes with as much as 9.6 terabytes of local SATA storage (enough for several hours of high-end dual link video), and happens to be one of the first Direct Disk Recorders capable of supporting 4:4:4 RGB video. It's also priced at US\$25,000.

More affordable for the home user is the Startcom Linux MultiMedia Edition, whose latest add-on CD of programs includes video editing, audio recording, CD ripping and music sequencing and sampling tools. The download, and the added responsibility, is free.

By Lee Rickwood

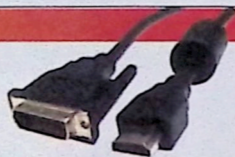
Lee Rickwood is a freelance writer and independent video producer. He operates Word On A Wire, an independent company providing editorial, video production and consulting services to individuals and companies across North America. He can be reached at videodaze@goodmedia.com.



Linux and open source software are not the only alternative computing options for video editing. Hark up those who remember – or still use – the Amiga operating system! It can rightly be described as supporting the first real time video app – The Tracker – and should not be forgotten.



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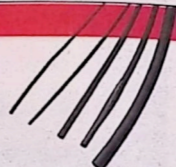
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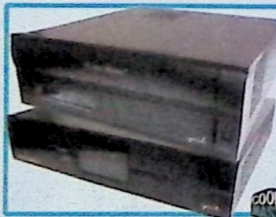


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<b>FUJITSU N3410B</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.73GHZ, 512MB DDR2 RAM, 80G HD, 802.11G WLAN DVD-RW BURNER, 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15.4" CRYSTAL TFT, MEDIA CENTER AFTER \$75 REBATE <b>\$1398<sup>99</sup></b>		<b>FUJITSU N3511B</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.86GHZ, 512MB DDR2 RAM, 80G HD, 802.11G WLAN DVD-RW BURNER, 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15.4" CRYSTAL XGA TFT, XPH ATI RADEON X300 64MB <b>\$1398<sup>99</sup></b>		<b>FUJITSU S6231B</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.7GHZ, 512MB RAM, 60G HD, DVD-RW BURNER, 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 13.3" CRYSTAL XGA TFT, 4.3LBS WINDOWS XP HOME <b>\$1798<sup>99</sup></b>		<b>FUJITSU C2330</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.7GHZ, 512MB RAM, 40G HD, DVD/CDRW COMBO, 802.11B/G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15" CRYSTAL XGA TFT, 1.44 FLOPPY WINDOWS XP HOME <b>\$1398<sup>99</sup></b>		<b>FUJITSU C2320C</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.7GHZ, 512MB RAM, 60G HD, DVD-RW BURNER, 802.11B/G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15" CRYSTAL XGA TFT, 1.44 FLOPPY WINDOWS XP HOME <b>\$1498<sup>99</sup></b>							
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<b>FUJITSU S6240</b> INTEL SONOMA 1.73GHZ, 512MB RAM, 40G HD, DVD/CDRW, 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 13.3" CRYSTAL XGA TFT, 4.3LBS AFTER \$125 REBATE <b>\$1448</b>		<b>ASUS M6NE</b> INTEL CELERON 1.4 GHZ, 512MB RAM, 40G HD, DVD/CDRW, 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15" XGA TFT, ATI RADEON 9600 64M <b>\$1098</b>		<b>TOSHIBA TECRA S2</b> INTEL SONOMA 1.73GHZ, 512MB RAM, 60G HD, DVD/CDRW COMBO, 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15" TFT, XPPRO, 3YR ATI X600 64MB <b>\$1798</b>		<b>TOSHIBA P10</b> INTEL P4 3.2GHZ, 512MB RAM, 80G HD, DVD BURNER, 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 15.4" CRYSTAL WXGA TFT, XPMCE ATI 9700 64MB <b>\$1898</b>		<b>IBM THINKPAD Z60T</b> INTEL SONOMA 1.73GHZ, (533M, 2MB) 512MB RAM, 40G SATA HD, DVD/CDRW COMBO 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 1000 LAN, 14" WXGA WIDE SCREEN, XPP, FINGER PRINTER <b>\$1398</b>		<b>IBM THINKPAD R40</b> INTEL DOTHAN 1.6GHZ (2MB) 512MB RAM, 40G SATA HD, DVD/CDRW COMBO 802.11G WLAN 56K MODEM, 1000 LAN 15" XGA SCREEN, XPP ATI RADEON 7500 32M <b>\$1198</b>		<b>IBM THINKPAD R50E</b> INTEL CELERON 1.5GHZ, 256MB RAM, 40G HD, DVD/CDRW COMBO, 802.11 WLAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 14" XGA TFT, WINDOWS XP HOME <b>\$998</b>		<b>IBM THINKPAD X41</b> INTEL Pm750 1.5GHZ, 512MB RAM, 40G HD, 802.11 WLAN/1000LAN 56K MODEM, 10/100 LAN, 12.1" XGA TFT, XPP SUPER SLIM, FINGER PRINTER ONLY 2 LBS <b>\$1998</b>	



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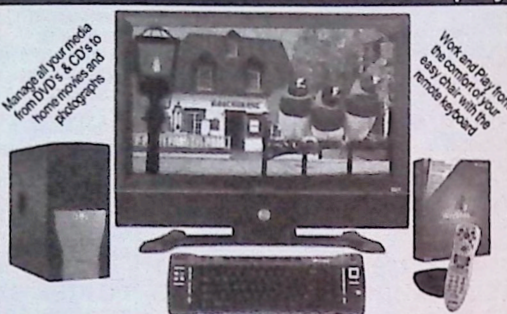
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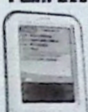
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# Five tips for buying flash memory

Buying a new memory card for your digital camera is a lot like ordering a pizza: it seems like a simple enough process until you realize the vast number of choices you have to make.

The good news is that flash memory has dropped in price considerably over the past few years, making it a relatively affordable investment, and one that will likely be one of the most valuable and useful digital camera accessories you'll purchase.

With this in mind, you need to know a few things before you pick one up. Here's our Top Five list of considerations when shopping for a memory card.

## Compatibility

Flash memory cards come in all shapes and sizes. The first thing you need to know is which one your digital camera takes, since all of them are incompatible with one another (with the exception of Secure Digital and MultiMedia Cards, or MMCs, which fit in the same slot). Examples of popular formats include SecureDigital (SD), the slightly larger and thicker Compact Flash (CF) and Sony's multiple Memory Stick styles. It is estimated that 85 per cent of digital cameras today take one of the aforementioned three formats. Lesser-known formats include the tiny xD, used with many Olympus and Fujifilm digital cameras, and

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SmartMedia, which was popular a few years ago. Many professional-grade digital cameras, such as SLRs (Single Lens Reflex) models, take CF cards as they're more durable, can be rapidly inserted into the camera and are more resistant to the elements.

### Capacity to price

The larger the memory capacity on the card, the more photos you can store on it. For example, a 3-megapixel digital camera may only store 25 photos on the 32MB card it came with. But if you pick up a 1-gigabyte (GB) card, you can now store more than 850 images. A 7-megapixel camera takes higher-quality photos, so the file size will be larger,

therefore you may only be able to store eight photos on a 32MB card, or more than 260 shots on a 1GB card. A higher capacity card is also ideal for storing video clips, since many digicams these days allow you to shoot mini movies with sound. Depending on the brand [see below], it should cost less than 10 cents per Megabyte on average, therefore a 512MB memory card should cost about \$45 or so, while a 1GB memory card should be less than \$100. Some memory card formats are less expensive than others.

### Speed

Flash memory cards can vary in speed. The speed refers to how fast

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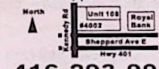
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information is written to or read from the card – when it is inserted into a PC's card reader, for example. Therefore, the faster the memory card speed, the better: for example, 40x is better than 24x, and 80x is better than 40x. Generally, the higher-speed cards will cost more, too. If the card is speed-rated, this information will be written on the card itself as well as on the packaging. Memory cards with faster speeds (for example, 80x) are often labeled as a "pro series" card, as they're sought after by professional photographers who might want to hold down the shutter button to take multiple shots at once. Faster memory card speeds are also ideal for shooting video because they will capture the

maximum frames-per-second for smoother motion.

## Brand

Some industry experts believe there is little difference in quality between aggressively priced memory cards and those produced by the more renowned manufacturers. Others maintain there is a noticeable distinction when it comes to speed, performance, reliability, and longevity. It's always a good idea to take note of the company's warranty before you purchase a memory card. Also research the company's technical support setup – look for a toll-free telephone number and reasonable hours of operation.

## Extras

Flash memory cards may vary in extras. A SecureDigital card, for example, get its name because you can flick a small switch on its side or back to secure its contents (protecting it from being accidentally erased). Along with password-protection on some of its cards, Lexar has recently developed something called an ActiveMemory System that adds information to a memory card such as preferred camera settings when it's popped into a compatible camera. This technology can also be used to store the owner's name, address and photo preferences (e.g. glossy 5 x 7 prints, no doubles) so the card can be dropped off at a photo mat with all of this information included – and now you won't need to fill out one of those pesky forms.

By Marc Saltzman



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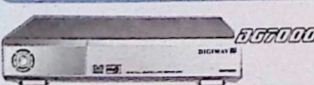
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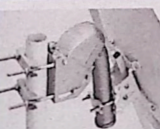
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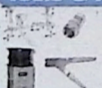
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# I want my WMC

I'm a fan of Microsoft. I'm aware that this is an unfashionable position for any number of reasons, but the plain truth is that my experience with Microsoft products has been, by and large, pretty good.

My trust of the Microsoft brand is why I became an early adopter of Windows XP Media Center Edition (WMC), a Windows operating system pre-installed in select retail PCs that includes an all-in-one Windows-integrated application providing access, control, and management functionality for a broad range of digital media, including television, DVDs, music, video, radio, and photos.

I haven't regretted my purchase of an HP Media Center PC for a minute.

My wife loves the TiVo-esque television features, which allow her to pause and rewind live TV, record up to 200GB of programming, and browse the upcoming month of television by show title, actor, and director. I use WMC not only for television, but also to organize my collection of home videos and digital photographs and to create slide shows and presentations for family and friends.

But WMC isn't perfect. We occasionally run into glitches while watching DVDs, iTunes is still our preferred music player, and we have found little use for WMC's online spotlight functionality, which acts as little more than a way of bookmarking favourite sites viewed through Internet Explorer.

With these issues in mind (and in the spirit of the theme of this month's issue, "Alternative Computing"), I decided to do a bit of research on Microsoft's competition.

The first application I looked into was Apple's Front Row, which comes installed on Apple's new G5 desktop computer. If Front Row delivered everything I love about WMC and integrated iTunes to boot, it might merit serious consideration.

As it turns out, Front Row seems to be little more than a slick front-end, providing access to several existing Apple applications that handle music, movies, and pictures. And while these applications are admittedly powerful and attractive, they don't make up for Front Row's lack of television functionality — my wife will never give up the ability to record and burn to DVD an entire television series at the



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touch of a few buttons. This gaping hole keeps Front Row from being true competition for WMC.

In the end, Front Row's greatest selling point is its Apple Remote, a predictably chic-looking gadget that has been efficiently scaled back to what Apple calls "the six buttons you really need." (For the curious, those buttons are Play/Pause, Back, Forward, Up, Down, and Menu.)

The next application I looked at was Meedio, a suite of modules that can turn your existing PC into a multimedia machine.

Meedio comes in two chunks: Meedio Essentials and Meedio TV. When combined, these two applications create an impressive multimedia package.

Meedio Essentials provides the ability to view and organize pictures, home videos, and music. It also comes with a DVD player and a number of bonus features, such as RSS news feeds, weather updates, and a selection of simple games that can be played with a remote control.

Meedio TV delivers personal television features, including the ability to play, pause, rewind, and record live TV. It offers an electronic program guide similar to the one I use with my WMC, and it supports multiple tuner cards, which means users can record and watch several channels at the same time.

I was very impressed with Meedio's design and functionality. Indeed, the only immediately discernable advantage held by my WMC PC is that it came with a TV tuner card and a remote control — items that Meedio users will have to buy and install themselves.

Meedio Pro, which includes both Meedio TV and Meedio Essentials, is available for download from the Meedio Web site ([www.meedio.com](http://www.meedio.com)) for US\$79.99

(around \$90). Even taking into consideration the cost of a TV tuner card and a remote control, the total price of transforming your existing PC into a media center using Meedio Pro is far less expensive than buying a brand new WMC.

The last WMC alternative I checked out was MythTV, which is described by its creator on the MythTV Web site as a "homebrew PVR project."

An open source application free to anyone who wants to download it, MythTV is a surprisingly full-featured solution that provides complete television controls (including the ability to pause and rewind live TV), an impressive programming guide, and TV recording capabilities. Add-on modules provide additional functionality for DVD playing, picture viewing, Web browsing, and more.

It's hard to criticize something that's free — especially when someone has spent years toiling over it without any remuneration. That said, there are a few things potential MythTV users should know.

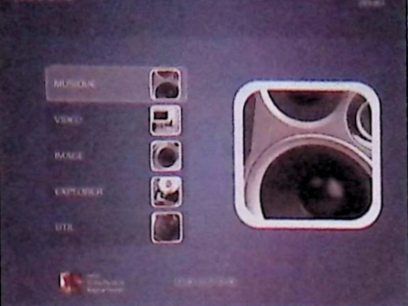
For starters, it has peculiar system requirements, including a Linux operating system and MySQL database — a full list of system requirements can be found on the MythTV website ([www.mythtv.org](http://www.mythtv.org)). The website also contains extensive support documentation including installation instructions and troubleshooting guides if you run into problems — which, in all likelihood, you will (needless to say, MythTV hasn't gone through the rigorous testing typically associated with off-the-shelf applications).

Another potential issue is MythTV's less than elegant presentation, which features generic looking visual flourishes and is saturated with a home-designed aesthetic. Keep in mind, though, that a poorly decorated interface doesn't affect functionality.





meedio



Put succinctly, MythTV is for tech-minded users with no interest in the kind of visual sparkle that Apple and Microsoft spend millions of dollars developing, and who aren't afraid to spend a few hours here and there tinkering with their computers to overcome glitches and compatibility issues. Alas, no one in my household falls within those ranks. I think I'll stick with my Windows Media Center for now. There's something to be said for Microsoft's no-brain solution; it's quick and easy to set up, guaranteed to work right out of the box, and free of the hassles associated with buying and installing additional hardware and software. But Microsoft had best watch out. Solutions like Meedio are going to make it hard for Bill Gates' software empire to dominate the media PC market the way it has so many others.

By Chad Sapieha

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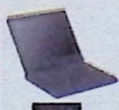
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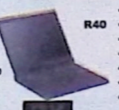
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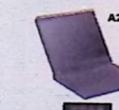
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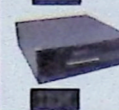
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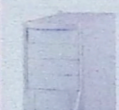
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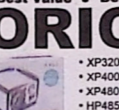
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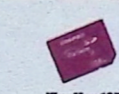
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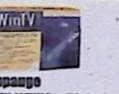
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# Working from home: Are you ready?

Have you ever wondered how much time is wasted each working day by the thousands of people driving to and from work in Canada?

According to Statistics Canada, people working in large metropolitan areas like Toronto and Montreal spend, on average, more than one hour per day commuting. This translates into five hours per week and 260 hours per year, which is equivalent to nearly 11 full days of life or, if you prefer, 6.5 weeks of work.

The question is this: Considering the progress made in accessing, securing, using and transferring knowledge with a mere computer and the ability to do all this at home, is going to work in an office building downtown really necessary?

Some experts say no.

In fact, studies are showing that "teleworkers" (people who work at home rather than at the office) are subjected to less interruptions and become more productive. This, according to the same studies, leads to "improvements in employment performance, satisfaction, motivation and morale. Teleworkers usually report an increased feeling of control over their lives, which reduces stress."

So why aren't more people teleworking?

In 1996, a census conducted by Statistics Canada reported that 122,314 people were working from home in Toronto and 81,205 in Montreal. Five years later, those numbers only grew by 24 per cent in



Toronto (for a total of 152,285) and 12 per cent in Montreal (for a total of 93,120). This represents an average yearly growth of less than five per cent in Toronto and just over two per cent in Montreal).

"It's not a phenomenal increase," notes Diane Gabrielle Tremblay, professor and director of research at Montreal's Télé-Université. The reason? "Even today there are few formal teleworking programs in place."

And there have been setbacks, she adds. "In the public service, some teleworking programs have been withdrawn or reduced, apparently because of a lesser collective efficiency; large corporations have also been reluctant to embark on such programs, mainly because of security reasons."

## The pros:

**For employees:** No time wasted commuting, no traveling costs, optimization of working hours, better work/family conciliation, better working conditions, increased motivation, better communication with managers and colleagues, less stress; better health.

**For employers:** Increased productivity, reduced operating costs, less absenteeism, positive effects of management through results, better corporate image.

## The cons:

**For employees:** A feeling of isolation, a feeling of being penalized in terms of career advancement, vulnerability to management abuse, a feeling of not being part of the decision process.

**For employers:** Supervision is difficult, less team spirit, training costs, installation costs, privacy control.

## The pros and cons

Teleworking should appeal to both employees and employers despite a few negative points, says Tremblay.

Society in general would also be affected by teleworking, which could lead to less traffic and pollution, fewer road repairs and accidents, and significant savings on gas, but could also result in a reduced occupancy rate in downtown office buildings, and less business for downtown shops, restaurants, and parking lots.

The time wasted in commuting is a growing concern, not only for the employees who are facing increasing travel expenses, but also for employers who remain at the mercy of weather and traffic conditions.

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## Alternative solutions?

Diane Gabrielle Tremblay says that in Europe, large corporations are looking at alternative solutions, such as setting up satellite offices outside metropolitan areas.

"I know that in Belgium, for instance, Siemens, HP and IBM are looking at those types of alternatives," she says.

Tremblay says she feels that teleworking is, somehow, the way to the future. "The transportation problem will not be solved and will not go

away," she says. "There is also the little known fact that people who work in offices downtown work an additional six hours a week at home on the average. So they are already teleworking in some way.

"There is also a growing desire for better working conditions and for saving time and money among employees. And there is this commitment to family life, and to family obligations. We notice, for instance, that the percentage of men migrating to teleworking to meet family obligations has increased from two per cent to 6.75 per cent in

the past four years.

"All this, in my view, cannot but lead to a surge in the number of people who demand to be allowed to work from home," says Tremblay.

Another point to keep in mind is the fact that people are getting more and more familiar with computer science every day and with all the advantages it provides. "You can work with your computer at home in exactly the same way as if you were in the office. You can even talk face to face with your boss and your colleagues while being at your desk at home," she points out.

"I am convinced that teleworking will take off in a big way in not too distant a future."

By André Salwyn



Next month: Are you set to become a teleworker?

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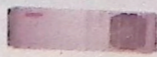


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# Porn, pixels and profit

## Adult Web sites and the webmasters who run them

Twelve billion per year. That's what the online adult sex industry is estimated to be worth.

Clearly, there's a lot of money to be made by selling sex online, and all kinds of webmasters are making it. It's possible for an individual webmaster to make between \$200 and \$400,000 per year, according to Jim Deans, who runs [www.thehiddenwife.com](http://www.thehiddenwife.com) with his wife Jenn in Ottawa. "[It] just depends on luck, skill, and how much you will put into it in time and money."

### All shapes, all sizes

Adult webmastering is not a cookie-cutter industry. In fact, online adult sites exist in all shapes and sizes. Some are one-man bands, like [www.velvetcstasy.com](http://www.velvetcstasy.com), where webmaster Victor does everything from photographing models to creating and maintaining the Web site, and handling credit card billing. Others are run by sexually active couples who webcast their own antics for fun and profit (on sites such as [www.thehiddenwife.com](http://www.thehiddenwife.com) and [www.hotpussycat.com](http://www.hotpussycat.com)).

"We, as a couple, were having some fun one night with our webcam and someone asked if he could pay me to get naked on the cam, so I did," says [Hotpussycat.com](http://Hotpussycat.com)'s Cat Dev.

Larger companies do it all. Founded by IT programmer Mark

Prince, [www.2much.net](http://www.2much.net) sells live adult video chats between "hostesses" and customers, and sells professionally-supported versions of its LiveCamNetwork software to other webmasters. LiveCamNetworks.com has become such a success that the company's Montreal studio is now the subject of the Showcase TV series Webdreams.

"We make five dollars U.S. a minute on each live video chat, and our payment to our girls per minute is 75 cents Canadian," says Mark Prince. "The remaining money is our net profit, after we've covered \$5,000 rent on 6,000 square feet, salaries, equipment, and bandwidth costs. If the girls work out of their own homes, they make \$1.25 a minute, because we don't have to provide the facilities."

This is just the tip of the iceberg: There are adult webmasters who direct potential customers to pay sites for a share of the revenue ([www.mywifebucks.com](http://www.mywifebucks.com)), run online job boards for aspiring adult performers ([www.sexyjobs.com](http://www.sexyjobs.com)), and host adult search engines ([www.booble.com](http://www.booble.com)).

### The profits

Adult webmasters make their money in many ways. The most obvious is to charge customers to view the site after enticing them there through banner ads, word-of-mouth, or "free samples" posted on TGP (Thumbnail Gallery Post) Web sites. Charging by the minute for live

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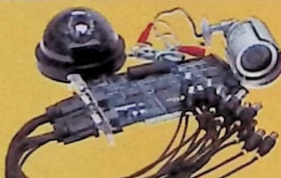
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video chats, where the customer sees the performer via webcam and talks with him or her by real-time text messaging, is just one version of this model. Typically, sites like LiveCamNetwork.com have their customers pay for time upfront by credit card, then debit from that payment as the clock ticks down.

Another way to make money is through affiliate programs, where

different Web sites share revenue when they direct traffic to each other's sites. Throw in adult DVDs, toys, and performer souvenirs such as preworn lingerie, and the sales opportunities appear endless.

This said, there is no "killer app" in the adult Web business, says Becky DeForest. An eight year industry veteran, DeForest runs [www.stormmedia.com](http://www.stormmedia.com) and is

an operator of multiple adult Web sites and license holder for more than 2,000,000 adult stills and 300,000 adult movies.

"Income depends on what you do and what your goals are," DeForest tells HUB. "I know millionaires that have made their money solely from referring memberships to other sites. I also know millionaires that are pay site owners ... I also read just about every day that someone has made their business so successful that they quit their nine-to-five gig."

#### Content is king ... and queen

Whatever they are offering, adult webmasters know that content is king. Whether they hire and photograph models themselves, or use content licensed from someone else, they know



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Intel Pentium 4 630	\$1304.99 or \$482/mth
Intel Pentium 4 640	\$1349.99 or \$492/mth
Intel Pentium D 820	\$1394.99 or \$512/mth

## PREMIER CHOICE BLACK

- Asus P3N32-SLI Motherboard for Intel Socket 775 or Asus AMN-SLI Premium Motherboard for AMD 939
- Panasonic 3.5" - 1.44MB Black Floppy Disk Drive
- WD250GB SATA100 Hard Drive w/ 15MB
- 1GB DDR RAM, PC3200 RAM Memory (2x 512MB)
- Enlight Black Mid-Tower ATX Case w/ 7 Bays
- Enlight True 450WATX Power Supply w/ 250MM
- Asus EN8500GT GeForce 8800XT w/ 256MB, PCI-E
- Sony DVD-Q30A Black 16X DVD-RW w/ Software
- Sony 16X Black DVD-RW w/ 48X CD-RW
- Enlight KB700 104 Black Soft-Touch Keyboard
- Logitech X-530 w/ 5 Speakers & Subwoofer
- US Robotics 56K Internal Fax/Modem v.90 (PCI)
- On-board Gigabit Full Duplex Network Adapter
- Viewsonic VX924 17" 3ms Digital LCD Monitor
- Keytronic 104 Enhanced Soft-Touch Keyboard
- Logitech Optical Mouse w/ Wheel w/ Mouse Pad
- MS Windows XP Home OEM w/ CD and Manual
- 5 Years Labour & 1 Year Parts Warranty

AMD Athlon 64-3000+	\$1724.99 or \$582/mth
AMD Athlon 64-3500+	\$1779.99 or \$602/mth
AMD Athlon 64-3700+	\$1834.99 or \$612/mth
AMD Athlon 64-3800+	\$1939.99 or \$652/mth
AMD Athlon 64-4200+	\$2004.99 or \$662/mth
Intel Celeron D 331	\$1634.99 or \$552/mth
Intel Celeron D 341	\$1659.99 or \$562/mth
Intel Pentium 4 630	\$1749.99 or \$582/mth
Intel Pentium 4 640	\$1794.99 or \$592/mth
Intel Pentium D 820	\$1849.99 or \$612/mth

PREMIER COMPUTER CANADA COMPUTER SPECIALS ARE SUGGESTIONS ONLY. THEY CAN BE CUSTOMER IN-STORE ONLY. <http://www.pccanada.com> OR BY FAX AT 416-251-2215.

### PREMIER CELLERON UPGRADE BUNDLE

Intel Retail Celeron x64 CPU	331	see web
Asus P5DV-MX Motherboard	331	see web
512MB DDR RAM, PC3200	346	see web
Enlight Mid-Tower w/ Enlight 300W	346	see web

### PREMIER COMPUTER CANADA UPGRADE BUNDLES - Sorry, no substitutions

AMD Sempron x64 CPU	2800+ see web
Asus K8V-X SE Motherboard	3000+ see web
512MB DDR RAM, PC3200	3100+ see web
Enlight Mid-Tower w/ Enlight 300W	3300+ see web

### PREMIER PENTIUM 5 UPGRADE BUNDLE

Intel Retail Pentium 4 CPU x64	630	see web
Asus P5L02 Motherboard	640	see web
512MB DDR2 RAM, 667MHz	650	see web
Chentbro Mid-Tower w/ Enlight 350W	820	see web

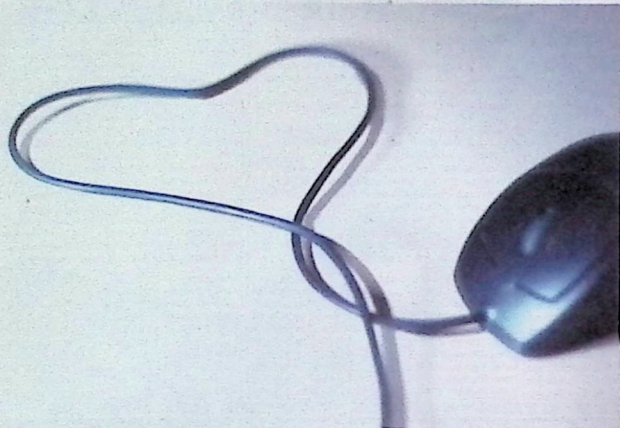
### PREMIER ATHLON 64 UPGRADE BUNDLE

AMD Retail-Boxed Athlon 64 CPU	3000+ see web
Asus AMN-E Motherboard	3500+ see web
512MB DDR RAM, PC3200	3700+ see web
Chentbro Mid-Tower w/ Enlight 450W	4400+ see web

### Premier CPU's & Motherboards

AMD Sempron 2800+	\$589.99 or \$222/mth	AMD Athlon 64 3500+	\$639.99 or \$242/mth
AMD Sempron 3000+	\$604.99 or \$222/mth	AMD Athlon 64 3700+	\$699.99 or \$272/mth
AMD Sempron 3500+	\$639.99 or \$242/mth	AMD Athlon 64 3800+	\$719.99 or \$282/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3000+	\$639.99 or \$242/mth	AMD Athlon 64 4200+	\$759.99 or \$302/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3200+	\$659.99 or \$252/mth	AMD Athlon 64 4400+	\$779.99 or \$312/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3400+	\$679.99 or \$262/mth	AMD Athlon 64 4600+	\$799.99 or \$322/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3600+	\$699.99 or \$272/mth	AMD Athlon 64 4800+	\$819.99 or \$332/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3800+	\$719.99 or \$282/mth	AMD Athlon 64 5000+	\$839.99 or \$342/mth
AMD Athlon 64 4000+	\$739.99 or \$292/mth	AMD Athlon 64 5200+	\$859.99 or \$352/mth
AMD Athlon 64 4200+	\$759.99 or \$302/mth	AMD Athlon 64 5400+	\$879.99 or \$362/mth
AMD Athlon 64 4400+	\$779.99 or \$312/mth	AMD Athlon 64 5600+	\$899.99 or \$372/mth
AMD Athlon 64 4600+	\$799.99 or \$322/mth	AMD Athlon 64 5800+	\$919.99 or \$382/mth
AMD Athlon 64 4800+	\$819.99 or \$332/mth	AMD Athlon 64 6000+	\$939.99 or \$392/mth
AMD Athlon 64 5000+	\$839.99 or \$342/mth	AMD Athlon 64 6200+	\$959.99 or \$402/mth
AMD Athlon 64 5200+	\$859.99 or \$352/mth	AMD Athlon 64 6400+	\$979.99 or \$412/mth
AMD Athlon 64 5400+	\$879.99 or \$362/mth	AMD Athlon 64 6600+	\$999.99 or \$422/mth
AMD Athlon 64 5600+	\$899.99 or \$372/mth	AMD Athlon 64 6800+	\$1019.99 or \$432/mth
AMD Athlon 64 5800+	\$919.99 or \$382/mth	AMD Athlon 64 7000+	\$1039.99 or \$442/mth
AMD Athlon 64 6000+	\$939.99 or \$392/mth	AMD Athlon 64 7200+	\$1059.99 or \$452/mth
AMD Athlon 64 6200+	\$959.99 or \$402/mth	AMD Athlon 64 7400+	\$1079.99 or \$462/mth
AMD Athlon 64 6400+	\$979.99 or \$412/mth	AMD Athlon 64 7600+	\$1099.99 or \$472/mth
AMD Athlon 64 6600+	\$999.99 or \$422/mth	AMD Athlon 64 7800+	\$1119.99 or \$482/mth
AMD Athlon 64 6800+	\$1019.99 or \$432/mth	AMD Athlon 64 8000+	\$1139.99 or \$492/mth
AMD Athlon 64 7000+	\$1039.99 or \$442/mth	AMD Athlon 64 8200+	\$1159.99 or \$502/mth
AMD Athlon 64 7200+	\$1059.99 or \$452/mth	AMD Athlon 64 8400+	\$1179.99 or \$512/mth
AMD Athlon 64 7400+	\$1079.99 or \$462/mth	AMD Athlon 64 8600+	\$1199.99 or \$522/mth
AMD Athlon 64 7600+	\$1099.99 or \$472/mth	AMD Athlon 64 8800+	\$1219.99 or \$532/mth
AMD Athlon 64 7800+	\$1119.99 or \$482/mth	AMD Athlon 64 9000+	\$1239.99 or \$542/mth
AMD Athlon 64 8000+	\$1139.99 or \$492/mth	AMD Athlon 64 9200+	\$1259.99 or \$552/mth
AMD Athlon 64 8200+	\$1159.99 or \$502/mth	AMD Athlon 64 9400+	\$1279.99 or \$562/mth
AMD Athlon 64 8400+	\$1179.99 or \$512/mth	AMD Athlon 64 9600+	\$1299.99 or \$572/mth
AMD Athlon 64 8600+	\$1199.99 or \$522/mth	AMD Athlon 64 9800+	\$1319.99 or \$582/mth
AMD Athlon 64 8800+	\$1219.99 or \$532/mth	AMD Athlon 64 10000+	\$1339.99 or \$592/mth
AMD Athlon 64 9000+	\$1239.99 or \$542/mth	AMD Athlon 64 10200+	\$1359.99 or \$602/mth
AMD Athlon 64 9200+	\$1259.99 or \$552/mth	AMD Athlon 64 10400+	\$1379.99 or \$612/mth
AMD Athlon 64 9400+	\$1279.99 or \$562/mth	AMD Athlon 64 10600+	\$1399.99 or \$622/mth
AMD Athlon 64 9600+	\$1299.99 or \$572/mth	AMD Athlon 64 10800+	\$1419.99 or \$632/mth
AMD Athlon 64 9800+	\$1319.99 or \$582/mth	AMD Athlon 64 11000+	\$1439.99 or \$642/mth
AMD Athlon 64 10000+	\$1339.99 or \$592/mth	AMD Athlon 64 11200+	\$1459.99 or \$652/mth
AMD Athlon 64 10200+	\$1359.99 or \$602/mth	AMD Athlon 64 11400+	\$1479.99 or \$662/mth
AMD Athlon 64 10400+	\$1379.99 or \$612/mth	AMD Athlon 64 11600+	\$1499.99 or \$672/mth
AMD Athlon 64 10600+	\$1399.99 or \$622/mth	AMD Athlon 64 11800+	\$1519.99 or \$682/mth
AMD Athlon 64 10800+	\$1419.99 or \$632/mth	AMD Athlon 64 12000+	\$1539.99 or \$692/mth
AMD Athlon 64 11000+	\$1439.99 or \$642/mth	AMD Athlon 64 12200+	\$1559.99 or \$702/mth
AMD Athlon 64 11200+	\$1459.99 or \$652/mth	AMD Athlon 64 12400+	\$1579.99 or \$712/mth
AMD Athlon 64 11400+	\$1479.99 or \$662/mth	AMD Athlon 64 12600+	\$1599.99 or \$722/mth
AMD Athlon 64 11600+	\$1499.99 or \$672/mth	AMD Athlon 64 12800+	\$1619.99 or \$732/mth
AMD Athlon 64 11800+	\$1519.99 or \$682/mth	AMD Athlon 64 13000+	\$1639.99 or \$742/mth
AMD Athlon 64 12000+	\$1539.99 or \$692/mth	AMD Athlon 64 13200+	\$1659.99 or \$752/mth
AMD Athlon 64 12200+	\$1559.99 or \$702/mth	AMD Athlon 64 13400+	\$1679.99 or \$762/mth
AMD Athlon 64 12400+	\$1579.99 or \$712/mth	AMD Athlon 64 13600+	\$1699.99 or \$772/mth
AMD Athlon 64 12600+	\$1599.99 or \$722/mth	AMD Athlon 64 13800+	\$1719.99 or \$782/mth
AMD Athlon 64 12800+	\$1619.99 or \$732/mth	AMD Athlon 64 14000+	\$1739.99 or \$792/mth
AMD Athlon 64 13000+	\$1639.99 or \$742/mth	AMD Athlon 64 14200+	\$1759.99 or \$802/mth
AMD Athlon 64 13200+	\$1659.99 or \$752/mth	AMD Athlon 64 14400+	\$1779.99 or \$812/mth
AMD Athlon 64 13400+	\$1679.99 or \$762/mth	AMD Athlon 64 14600+	\$1799.99 or \$822/mth
AMD Athlon 64 13600+	\$1699.99 or \$772/mth	AMD Athlon 64 14800+	\$1819.99 or \$832/mth
AMD Athlon 64 13800+	\$1719.99 or \$782/mth	AMD Athlon 64 15000+	\$1839.99 or \$842/mth
AMD Athlon 64 14000+	\$1739.99 or \$792/mth	AMD Athlon 64 15200+	\$1859.99 or \$852/mth
AMD Athlon 64 14200+	\$1759.99 or \$802/mth	AMD Athlon 64 15400+	\$1879.99 or \$862/mth
AMD Athlon 64 14400+	\$1779.99 or \$812/mth	AMD Athlon 64 15600+	\$1899.99 or \$872/mth
AMD Athlon 64 14600+	\$1799.99 or \$822/mth	AMD Athlon 64 15800+	\$1919.99 or \$882/mth
AMD Athlon 64 14800+	\$1819.99 or \$832/mth	AMD Athlon 64 16000+	\$1939.99 or \$892/mth
AMD Athlon 64 15000+	\$1839.99 or \$842/mth	AMD Athlon 64 16200+	\$1959.99 or \$902/mth
AMD Athlon 64 15200+	\$1859.99 or \$852/mth	AMD Athlon 64 16400+	\$1979.99 or \$912/mth
AMD Athlon 64 15400+	\$1879.99 or \$862/mth	AMD Athlon 64 16600+	\$1999.99 or \$922/mth
AMD Athlon 64 15600+	\$1899.99 or \$872/mth	AMD Athlon 64 16800+	\$2019.99 or \$932/mth
AMD Athlon 64 15800+	\$1919.99 or \$882/mth	AMD Athlon 64 17000+	\$2039.99 or \$942/mth
AMD Athlon 64 16000+	\$1939.99 or \$892/mth	AMD Athlon 64 17200+	\$2059.99 or \$952/mth
AMD Athlon 64 16200+	\$1959.99 or \$902/mth	AMD Athlon 64 17400+	\$2079.99 or \$962/mth
AMD Athlon 64 16400+	\$1979.99 or \$912/mth	AMD Athlon 64 17600+	\$2099.99 or \$972/mth
AMD Athlon 64 16600+	\$1999.99 or \$922/mth	AMD Athlon 64 17800+	\$2119.99 or \$982/mth
AMD Athlon 64 16800+	\$2019.99 or \$932/mth	AMD Athlon 64 18000+	\$2139.99 or \$992/mth
AMD Athlon 64 17000+	\$2039.99 or \$942/mth	AMD Athlon 64 18200+	\$2159.99 or \$1002/mth
AMD Athlon 64 17200+	\$2059.99 or \$952/mth	AMD Athlon 64 18400+	\$2179.99 or \$1012/mth
AMD Athlon 64 17400+	\$2079.99 or \$962/mth	AMD Athlon 64 18600+	\$2199.99 or \$1022/mth
AMD Athlon 64 17600+	\$2099.99 or \$972/mth	AMD Athlon 64 18800+	\$2219.99 or \$1032/mth
AMD Athlon 64 17800+	\$2119.99 or \$982/mth	AMD Athlon 64 19000+	\$2239.99 or \$1042/mth
AMD Athlon 64 18000+	\$2139.99 or \$992/mth	AMD Athlon 64 19200+	\$2259.99 or \$1052/mth
AMD Athlon 64 18200+	\$2159.99 or \$1002/mth	AMD Athlon 64 19400+	\$2279.99 or \$1062/mth
AMD Athlon 64 18400+	\$2179.99 or \$1012/mth	AMD Athlon 64 19600+	\$2299.99 or \$1072/mth
AMD Athlon 64 18600+	\$2199.99 or \$1022/mth	AMD Athlon 64 19800+	\$2319.99 or \$1082/mth
AMD Athlon 64 18800+	\$2219.99 or \$1032/mth	AMD Athlon 64 20000+	\$2339.99 or \$1092/mth
AMD Athlon 64 19000+	\$2239.99 or \$1042/mth	AMD Athlon 64 20200+	\$2359.99 or \$1102/mth
AMD Athlon 64 19200+	\$2259.99 or \$1052/mth	AMD Athlon 64 20400+	\$2379.99 or \$1112/mth
AMD Athlon 64 19400+	\$2279.99 or \$1062/mth	AMD Athlon 64 20600+	\$2399.99 or \$1122/mth
AMD Athlon 64 19600+	\$2299.99 or \$1072/mth	AMD Athlon 64 20800+	\$2419.99 or \$1132/mth
AMD Athlon 64 19800+	\$2319.99 or \$1082/mth	AMD Athlon 64 21000+	\$2439.99 or \$1142/mth
AMD Athlon 64 20000+	\$2339.99 or \$1092/mth	AMD Athlon 64 21200+	\$2459.99 or \$1152/mth
AMD Athlon 64 20200+	\$2359.99 or \$1102/mth	AMD Athlon 64 21400+	\$2479.99 or \$1162/mth
AMD Athlon 64 20400+	\$2379.99 or \$1112/mth	AMD Athlon 64 21600+	\$2499.99 or \$1172/mth
AMD Athlon 64 20600+	\$2399.99 or \$1122/mth	AMD Athlon 64 21800+	\$2519.99 or \$1182/mth
AMD Athlon 64 20800+	\$2419.99 or \$1132/mth	AMD Athlon 64 22000+	\$2539.99 or \$1192/mth
AMD Athlon 64 21000+	\$2439.99 or \$1142/mth	AMD Athlon 64 22200+	\$2559.99 or \$1202/mth
AMD Athlon 64 21200+	\$2459.99 or \$1152/mth	AMD Athlon 64 22400+	\$2579.99 or \$1212/mth
AMD Athlon 64 21400+	\$2479.99 or \$1162/mth	AMD Athlon 64 22600+	\$2599.99 or \$1222/mth
AMD Athlon 64 21600+	\$2499.99 or \$1172/mth	AMD Athlon 64 22800+	\$2619.99 or \$1232/mth
AMD Athlon 64 21800+	\$2519.99 or \$1182/mth	AMD Athlon 64 23000+	\$2639.99 or \$1242/mth
AMD Athlon 64 22000+	\$2539.99 or \$1192/mth	AMD Athlon 64 23200+	\$2659.99 or \$1252/mth
AMD Athlon 64 22200+	\$2559.99 or \$1202/mth	AMD Athlon 64 23400+	\$2679.99 or \$1262/mth
AMD Athlon 64 22400+	\$2579.99 or \$1212/mth	AMD Athlon 64 23600+	\$2699.99 or \$1272/mth
AMD Athlon 64 22600+	\$2599.99 or \$1222/mth	AMD Athlon 64 23800+	\$2719.99 or \$1282/mth
AMD Athlon 64 22800+	\$2619.99 or \$1232/mth	AMD Athlon 64 24000+	\$2739.99 or \$1292/mth
AMD Athlon 64 23000+	\$2639.99 or \$1242/mth	AMD Athlon 64 24200+	\$2759.99 or \$1302/mth
AMD Athlon 64 23200+	\$2659.99 or \$1252/mth	AMD Athlon 64 24400+	\$2779.99 or \$1312/mth
AMD Athlon 64 23400+	\$2679.99 or \$1262/mth	AMD Athlon 64 24600+	\$2799.99 or \$1322/mth
AMD Athlon 64 23600+	\$2699.99 or \$1272/mth	AMD Athlon 64 24800+	\$2819.99 or \$1332/mth
AMD Athlon 64 23800+	\$2719.99 or \$1282/mth	AMD Athlon 64 25000+	\$2839.99 or \$1342/mth
AMD Athlon 64 24000+	\$2739.99 or \$1292/mth	AMD Athlon 64 25200+	\$2859.99 or \$1352/mth
AMD Athlon 64 24200+	\$2759.99 or \$1302/mth	AMD Athlon 64 25400+	\$2879.99 or \$1362/mth
AMD Athlon 64 24400+	\$2779.99 or \$1312/mth	AMD Athlon 64 25600+	\$2899.99 or \$1372/mth
AMD Athlon 64 24600+	\$2799.99 or \$1322/mth	AMD Athlon 64 25800+	\$2919.99 or \$1382/mth
AMD Athlon 64 24800+	\$2819.99 or \$1332/mth	AMD Athlon 64 26000+	\$2939.99 or \$1392/mth
AMD Athlon 64 25000+	\$2839.99 or \$1342/mth	AMD Athlon 64 26200+	\$2959.99 or \$1402/mth
AMD Athlon 64 25200+	\$2859.99 or \$1352/mth	AMD Athlon 64 26400+	\$2979.99 or \$1412/mth
AMD Athlon 64 25400+	\$2879.99 or \$1362/mth	AMD Athlon 64 26600+	\$2999.99 or \$1422/mth
AMD Athlon 64 25600+	\$2899.99 or \$1372/mth	AMD Athlon 64 26800+	\$3019.99 or \$1432/mth
AMD Athlon 64 25800+	\$2919.99 or \$1382/mth	AMD Athlon 64 27000+	\$3039.99 or \$1442/mth
AMD Athlon 64 26000+	\$2939.99 or \$1392/mth	AMD Athlon 64 27200+	\$3059.99 or \$1452/mth
AMD Athlon 64 26200+	\$2959.99 or \$1402/mth	AMD Athlon 64 27400+	\$3079.99 or \$1462/mth
AMD Athlon 64 26400+	\$2979.99 or \$1412/mth	AMD Athlon 64 27600+	\$3099.99 or \$1472/mth
AMD Athlon 64 26600+	\$2999.99 or \$1422/mth	AMD Athlon 64 27800+	\$3119.99 or \$1482/mth
AMD Athlon 64 26800+	\$3019.99 or \$1432/mth	AMD Athlon 64 28000+	\$3139.99 or \$1492/mth
AMD Athlon 64 27000+	\$3039.99 or \$1442/mth	AMD Athlon 64 28200+	\$3159.99 or \$1502/mth
AMD Athlon 64 27200+	\$3059.99 or \$1452/mth	AMD Athlon 64 28400+	\$3179.99 or \$1512/mth
AMD Athlon 64 27400+	\$3079.99 or \$1462/mth	AMD Athlon 64 28600+	\$3199.99 or \$1522/mth
AMD Athlon 64 27600+	\$3099.99 or \$1472/mth	AMD Athlon 64 28800+	\$3219.99 or \$1532/mth
AMD Athlon 64 27800+	\$3119.99 or \$1482/mth	AMD Athlon 64 29000+	\$3239.99 or \$1542/mth
AMD Athlon 64 28000+	\$3139.99 or \$1492/mth	AMD Athlon 64 29200+	\$3259.99 or \$1552/mth
AMD Athlon 64 28200+	\$3159.99 or \$1502/mth	AMD Athlon 64 29400+	\$3279.99 or \$1562/mth
AMD Athlon 64 28400+	\$3179.99 or \$1512/mth	AMD Athlon 64 29600+	\$3299.99 or \$1572/mth
AMD Athlon 64 28600+	\$3199.99 or \$1522/mth	AMD Athlon 64 29800+	\$3319.99 or \$1582/mth
AMD Athlon 64 28800+	\$3219.99 or \$1532/mth	AMD Athlon 64 30000+	\$3339.99 or \$1592/mth
AMD Athlon 64 29000+	\$3239.99 or \$1542/mth	AMD Athlon 64 30200+	\$3359.99 or \$1602/mth
AMD Athlon 64 29200+	\$3259.99 or \$1552/mth	AMD Athlon 64 30400+	\$3379.99 or \$1612/mth
AMD Athlon 64 29400+	\$3279.99 or \$1562/mth	AMD Athlon 64 30600+	\$3399.99 or \$1622/mth
AMD Athlon 64 29600+	\$3299.99 or \$1572/mth	AMD Athlon 64 30800+	\$3419.99 or \$1632/mth
AMD Athlon 64 29800+	\$3319.99 or \$1582/mth	AMD Athlon 64 31000+	\$3439.99 or \$1642/mth
AMD Athlon 64 30000+	\$3339.99 or \$1592/mth	AMD Athlon 64 31200+	\$3459.99 or \$1652/mth
AMD Athlon 64 30200+	\$3359.99 or \$1602/mth	AMD Athlon 64 31400+	\$3479.99 or \$1662/mth
AMD Athlon 64 30400+	\$3379.99 or \$1612/mth	AMD Athlon 64 31600+	\$3499.99 or \$1672/mth
AMD Athlon 64 30600+	\$3399.99 or \$1622/mth	AMD Athlon 64 31800+	\$3519.99 or \$1682/mth
AMD Athlon 64 30800+	\$3419.99 or \$1632/mth	AMD Athlon 64 32000+	\$3539.99 or \$1692/mth
AMD Athlon 64 31000+	\$3439.99 or \$1642/mth	AMD Athlon 64 32200+	\$3559.99 or \$1702/mth
AMD Athlon 64 31200+	\$3459.99 or \$1652/mth	AMD Athlon 64 32400+	\$3579.99 or \$1712/mth
AMD Athlon 64 31400+	\$3479.99 or \$1662/mth	AMD Athlon 64 32600+	\$3599.99 or \$1722/mth
AMD Athlon 64 31600+	\$3499.99 or \$1672/mth	AMD Athlon 64 32800+	\$3619.99 or \$1732/mth
AMD Athlon 64 31800+	\$3519.99 or \$1682/mth	AMD Athlon 64 33000+	\$3639.99 or \$1742/mth
AMD Athlon 64 32000+	\$3539.99 or \$1692/mth	AMD Athlon 64 33200+	\$3659.99 or \$1752/mth
AMD Athlon 64 32200+	\$3559.99 or \$1702/mth	AMD Athlon 64 33400+	\$3679.99 or \$1762/mth
AMD Athlon 64 32400+	\$3579.99 or \$1712/mth	AMD Athlon 64 33600+	\$3699.99 or \$1772/mth
AMD Athlon 64 32600+	\$3599.99 or \$1722/mth	AMD Athlon 64 33800+	\$3719.99 or \$1782/mth
AMD Athlon 64 32800+	\$3619.99 or \$1732/mth	AMD Athlon 64 34000+	\$3739.99 or \$1792/mth
AMD Athlon 64 33000+	\$3639.99 or \$1742/mth	AMD Athlon 64 34200+	\$3759.99 or \$1802/mth
AMD Athlon 64 33200+	\$3659.99 or \$1752/mth	AMD Athlon 64 34400+	\$3779.99 or \$1812/mth
AMD Athlon 64 33400+	\$3679.99 or \$1762/mth	AMD Athlon 64 34600+	\$3799.99 or \$1822/mth
AMD Athlon 64 33600+	\$3699.99 or \$1772/mth	AMD Athlon 64 34800+	\$3819.99 or \$1832/mth
AMD Athlon 64 33800+	\$3719.99 or \$1782/mth	AMD Athlon 64 35000+	\$3839.99 or \$1842/mth
AMD Athlon 64 34000+	\$3739.99 or \$1792/mth	AMD Athlon 64 35200+	\$3859.99 or \$1852/mth
AMD Athlon 64 34200+	\$3759.99 or \$1802/mth	AMD Athlon 64 35400+	\$3879.99 or \$1862/mth
AMD Athlon 64 34400+	\$3779.99 or \$1812/mth	AMD Athlon 64 35600+	\$3899.99 or \$1872/mth
AMD Athlon 64 34600+	\$3799.99 or \$1822/mth	AMD Athlon 64 35800+	\$3919.99 or \$1882/mth
AMD Athlon 64 3480			





and also marketing. Stick with what you like; it's that simple. If you like it, [chances are] others do too."

#### Finding good help

One might think that it would be difficult to find adult models. However, it appears that the reverse is the case in our sex-centric society, according to [www.ynot.com](http://www.ynot.com) webmaster Connor Young, who says that the industry finds the people it needs through a variety of avenues. "Advertising, word of mouth, and actually going out and finding girls at clubs, bars, events and strip clubs are the most common means."

"We often get college girls who are comfortable with the technology, but not with working in strip clubs," says Mark Prince. "We end up with smart performers who know computers, either working from our studios or from home."

that they must have the most eye-catching and convincing models possible. Otherwise, their potential clients – who are generally middle-aged white males, according to everyone we spoke too – will surf elsewhere.

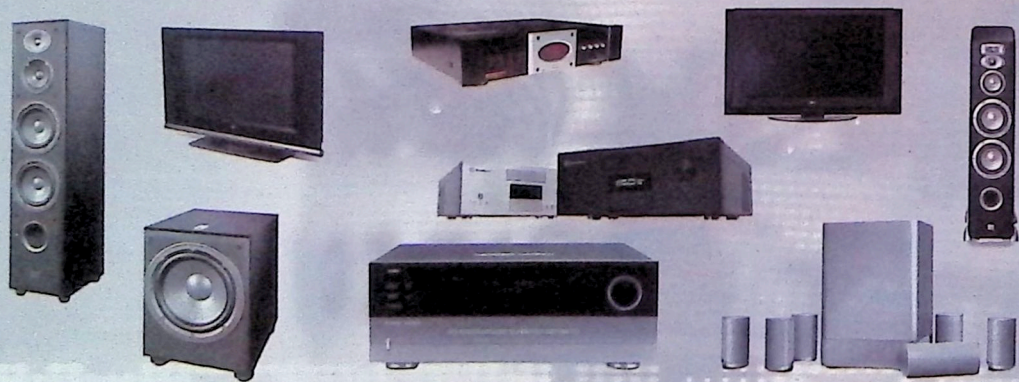
"You gotta sell something that people want to buy," says Abby Winters. "Sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised!"

In terms of which sexual preferences to cater to – within the law – "the best thing for someone to do is stick with what they personally like," says Cat Dev. "This guarantees dedication to research, content picking

"Most cities have online communities of models – some online communities transcend cities or countries – and word spreads fast about bad operators," adds Abby Winters, Webmaster of [www.abbywinters.com](http://www.abbywinters.com). This is why adult webmasters need to treat their models professionally and courteously, and pay them without resorting to sexual harassment," he says. "Demanding a [personal sexual favour] before payment is not acceptable."

So why would anyone bare it all on the Web? Exhibitionism, an uninhibited attitude to public sex, or a desire for some form of fame are

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among the reasons. But don't discount money: At 75 cents per minute, one of 2much.net's video chat girls can make up to \$45 per hour, and up to \$75 per hour if she works from home.

"The best part of my job is finding a girl who's working in retail or waitressing or even at a pizza place," says Nick Davis, Webmaster of the video chat site iCandys.net. "She makes no money, her apartment is a hole in the wall and she doesn't have any way to get out of it. And then we come along, and we show her what she can do, that is worth more than she thinks she is."

Two points that adult webmasters must remember: The models must be 18 years of age or older, and all necessary legalities must be followed in the Web site's home country. "We went as far as to discuss what we were planning with the police before we did a single video chat," Mark Prince says. "That's how important it is for us to stay within the law, for the sake of ourselves and our performers."

## The perils of adult webmastering

One might think that hackers and non-paying pirates would be the adult webmaster's biggest peril. But they aren't. Instead, according to Ottawa's Jim Deans, "The biggest challenge is reliable hosting from an adult-friendly hosting company, [because] any loss of a server for days or even hours can spell disaster."

Public disdain is also a constant threat for adult webmasters. This is why when Becky DeForest is asked what she does for a living, she replies, "Internet marketing and e-commerce management. Most don't ask beyond that!"

When people do "out" someone running an adult site, things can get nasty – especially if the site features the Webmaster as an online performer. Jim and Jenn Deans know this from personal experience. After a neighbour signed up to their site and learned who they were, their suburban Ottawa cover was blown. The result was lots of press coverage – which can arguably be good for business – protests outside the Deans' home, demands that they move away, and even vandalism of their property.

For his part, Jim Deans has taken this storm in stride. "This self-appointed moral majority will stop at nothing to keep adult material from being produced in Ottawa," Deans told [www.ynot.com](http://www.ynot.com); "all the while probably surfing it themselves." Maybe so, but this incident proves that the adult Webmastering trade is not for the faint-of-heart.

## The bottom line: It's a business

Don't let all the lurid pictures and racy hype fool you: The online adult business is just that – a business. As a result, those wishing to succeed must roll up their sleeves and work hard, just as if they were selling cars, farming fields, or auditing accounts.

"It is a retail business," says Deans. "It is not going to the cottage on the weekend, because you have to work. It is getting up at 5 a.m. because you just had an idea, monitoring bandwidth promoting your site, watching for hackers and password traders, and occasionally taking some pics of naked ladies."

By James Careless



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# The Mice that roared

Hardcore gamers are a breed apart, happy to shell out for the absolute best PC hardware. But you don't have to be a true gamer to appreciate the new breed of "gamer" mice.

The dramatically higher precision does make it easier to draw a bead on enemy players in an online deathmatch, but it can also help target an errant pixel in Photoshop, or reduce the strain in your daily desktop mousing.

## Razer Copperhead (\$90 - \$100)

Razer is the Ferrari of mice, with products that may not suit everyone but will out-handle anything else on the desktop.

Razer's latest model, the Copperhead, looks every bit the gaming hotrod: jet-black, with an eerily glowing stripe around the sides, and a pulsating logo on the top. Like the other mice we tested, it's a wired design, which keeps weight low and ensures a fast, error-free connection.

Shape is symmetrical, with two extra buttons on each side. The rubbery side-ridge makes for an odd grip, but you get used to it. There's no Mac support, unlike the other two mice tested.

But where the best standard mice read a surface no more than around 1,000 times per inch, the Copperhead's laser sensor reads 2,000 times, and signals your PC up to 1,000 times per second. (You can reduce the latter rate if you've got a slower system.)



Logitech G5

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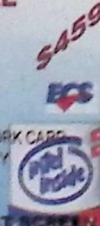
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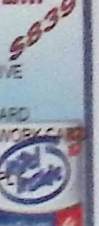
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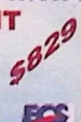
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The result is fantastic responsiveness and precision. You'll probably need to lower your sensitivity settings both in games and in the Windows desktop. But once you get hooked on the ability to pinpoint a single pixel with a twitch of your fingers, you'll never go back.

Razer's software control panel lets you assign keystrokes or longer "macro" key sequences to each button. Settings are stored in the mouse itself, for portability. You can instantly switch between five configurations.



Microsoft Laser Mouse

All told, the Copperhead is absolutely the mouse to beat. It's got the smoothest response available today, and will not only improve your game scores, but also ease more prosaic chores like graphic or audio editing.

### Logitech G5 Laser Mouse (\$90)

The latest gamer mouse from Logitech is equally a thoroughbred, but in a more well-mannered way.

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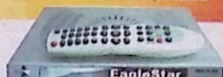
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scroll wheel can be programmed using Logitech's lavish control panel, by far the most friendly and comprehensive of those reviewed. [The G5 wheel even scrolled an older Windows application that the others couldn't.]

However, while the G5 has the same 2,000 dpi sampling as the Copperhead, the latter has noticeably smoother tracking. It's a fine distinction, to be sure. Both units are vastly superior to typical office mice.

A more distinctive feature of the G5 is that it's surprisingly hefty. Oddly, Logitech also includes a set of tiny weights you can insert to make it even heavier. Huge, extra-slippery plastic feet compensate somewhat, and the extra mass does make the G5 easier to control on the desktop, eliminating any tendency to shift when you press a button.

Still, if you do prefer a slightly larger, heavier mouse (and are right-handed!), the Logitech G5 is an excellent choice, and the most well-rounded of our three contenders.

## Microsoft Laser Mouse 6000 (\$70)

Last and least among gamer mice, Microsoft's Laser Mouse 6000 nonetheless has some notable strengths. Though cheaper than the others, it's a solid, handsome-looking piece, with dignified metallic-gry styling.

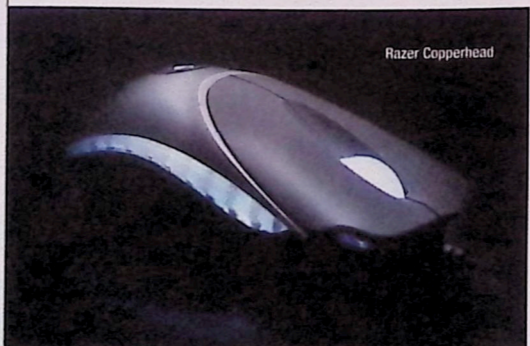
Microsoft's first entry in the "Game Precision Series," the 6000 has a laser sensor, but lackluster 800 dpi resolution. On-screen tracking is far less precise than with the other gamer mice, though adequate by normal standards.

The software control panel is rather basic, as well. And while all buttons can be reassigned, it can be tricky to find combinations that will work properly in recent games. Some users may enjoy the screen Magnifier function, though it's a frill we quickly disabled.

When it comes to comfort, however, the Laser Mouse 6000 scores big. The narrow-waisted peanut shape fits the hand perfectly (left or right), yet promotes a relaxed grip that reduces long-term fatigue. Even the scroll wheel feels good, omitting Microsoft's new side-tilt function, but retaining the bumpy "detents."

For gaming, the Laser Mouse 6000 offers little to recommend it over other models. But if you want the most comfortable mouse for all-around use, this is it.

By Frank Lenk



Razer Copperhead



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# Moving to Mac: Finding Software

One of the most common complaints about the Mac from Windows users is that "there's no software available for the Mac". While it's true that the majority of the software you'll find at your local software store is for Windows, the idea that the world of Mac software is a vast wasteland isn't quite true, either.

First of all, there's a metric boatload of software pre-installed on every new Mac, including multimedia applications like iDVD (movie playback), iPhoto (digital photo import and organization), iMovie (basic video editing and DVD creator), iChat (instant messaging program that's compatible with AIM), Safari (Web browser), GarageBand (music recording and creation program), and more.

If you're looking for additional software, there are a few reasons why there's a smaller selection available for Mac fans, but the number one reason is simply sheer numbers of users: it's harder to justify developing brand new software for both Windows and Mac when the Mac makes up a small percentage of the overall population. In some cases, Mac versions arrive later, but sometimes they never come at all.

Making matters worse, when software is released for the Mac, it rarely ships in volumes large enough to justify the types of prices you'll see on the Windows version of the software. Consequently, that new game that your Windows-loving friends are getting for \$50 may cost \$70 for the Mac. Ow.

The good news is that there are a ton of software developers out there writing for the Mac, and in many cases they're making the software available for free.

## Internet applications

Safari is the Web browser that comes pre-bundled with OS X, and while it's a perfectly good browser most of the time – especially with the

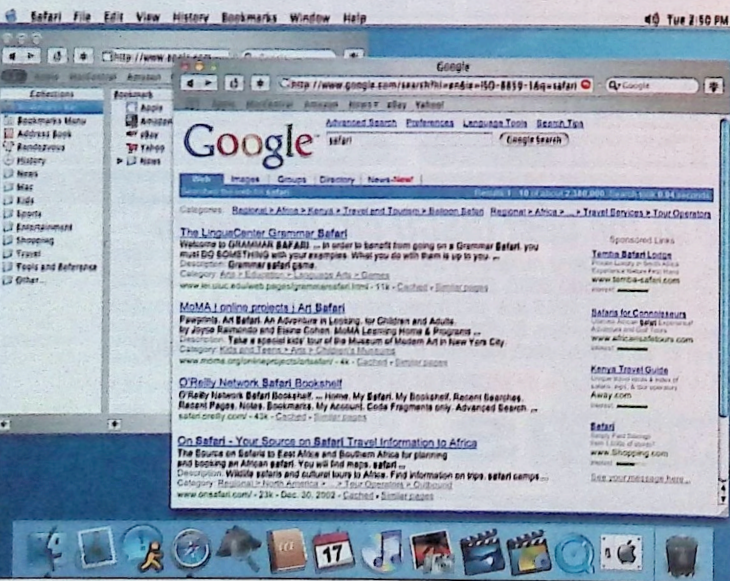
addition of nifty RSS reading capabilities – sometimes it's nice to have an alternative. Thankfully, Mozilla ([www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org)) continues to develop versions of Firefox for a variety of different operating systems, including Mac OS X. You can also get a Mac-ready version of the Opera browser ([www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)), now with 100 per cent fewer banner ads in the program itself!

There's a lot to like about the new version of the native Mail program in OS X, especially now that you can "bounce" unwanted mail back to the sender. Again, Mozilla has an alternative mail reader called Thunderbird that also integrates RSS feeds in the same window, giving you a single console for both mail and news if you'd rather not flip back and forth between two programs. There's also a version of the Eudora mail client available for the Mac, at [www.eudora.com](http://www.eudora.com).

If you're a fan of online chat programs, it's worth noting that the built-in iChat AV application is 100 per cent compatible with AOL Instant Messenger: during initial sign-up and while adding users it'll default to options with an @mac.com address, but you can change the drop-down box from ".Mac account" to ".AIM account" in both cases. Once you're done, you can even do video chat between Mac and Windows machines!

You do have the option of loading MSN Messenger for the Mac ([www.microsoft.com/mac](http://www.microsoft.com/mac)), but you'll quickly realize that it hasn't been as fully fleshed-out on the Mac as it has been on the PC, especially in terms of multimedia capabilities. There are a few clones out there for the Mac, including Mercury Messenger, which connects to MSN and includes webcam support.

Fans of Yahoo chat will be happy to know that Yahoo Messenger is also available for the Mac, including webcam support, from [messenger.yahoo.com](http://messenger.yahoo.com).



## Productivity applications

The first productivity suite you think of may be Microsoft Office, but it's by no means the only suite out there. In fact, Sun Microsystems has made its OpenOffice suite available for free download ([www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org)). The program has an interface very similar to the Microsoft version, which should make it very easy to make the switch if you don't want to blast through all your spending money just to get Word and Excel.

## Anti-virus, anti-spyware, and other security concerns

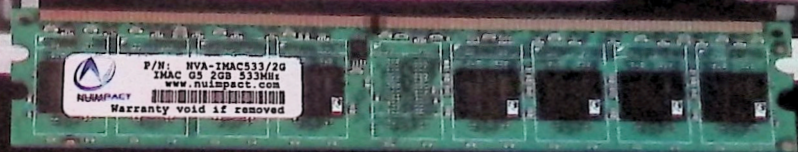
The general consensus is that this is an area that Mac users don't really need to worry about: there are few – if any – Mac viruses out there, which means that Macintosh-friendly anti-virus





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applications will simply be removing Windows viruses that arrived in your email box, and protecting Windows users from infected files in your shared folders. How benevolent. The new version of Norton AntiVirus for Macintosh will remove those Windows viruses from your system, and there's even a special dashboard widget that keeps you aware of recent threats.

## Odds and ends

Since moving to the Mac, one Web site I've found nearly indispensable has been VersionTracker ([www.versiontracker.com](http://www.versiontracker.com)). While you can download VersionTracker Pro software and pay a subscription fee to automatically stay on top of new versions of all of your favourite programs, the real value for the new user is the ability to search for

programs simply by typing a keyword into the search field, which anyone can do for free.

As with other software search sites like Tucows and download.com, VersionTracker shows you a list of matches, breaks them down into freeware and shareware, and allows users to rate the software, so you can tell at a glance what's hot and what sucks. The key difference with VersionTracker is that it assumes you're searching for Mac OS X software by default; you can also search for Windows and Palm programs if you change the pulldown bar beside the search window, but you have to work for it. It's nice to see the tables turned, for once.

By Sean Carruthers

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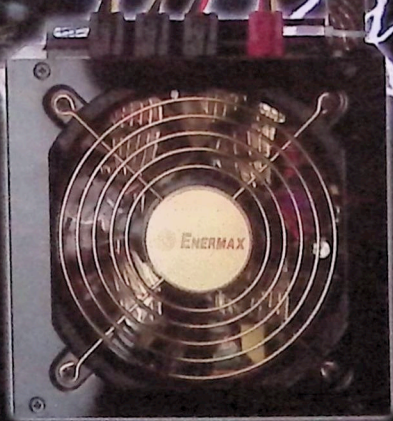


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Peter Jackson's King Kong:  
The Official Game of the Movie

Publisher / Developer: Ubisoft

ESRB: Teen Rating: 4 / 5

Platforms: Xbox, Xbox 360, PlayStation 2,  
GameCube, PC

Peter Jackson's King Kong: The Official Game of the Movie is easily one of the best film-to-videogame adaptations to date. Helmed by Ubisoft's Michel Ancel [Beyond Good & Evil], with input from Jackson himself and award-winning special effects studio WETA, King Kong transcends the bargain bin of clumsy and ill-conceived cash-grabs that often epitomize videogames based on movies.

It certainly doesn't hurt that the film's subject matter - classic monster movie material - is also perfect fodder for a game. As a result, gameplay feels like a natural extension of the film rather than something forced, as can often happen with licensed games that are no more than generic platformers or action/adventures with the licensed elements awkwardly grafted on top like a bad toupee.

Much of the game is experienced in first-person from the character Jack Driscoll's perspective. Jack is part of the film crew that travels to Skull Island to shoot a blockbuster movie, only to stumble upon a strange throwback to prehistory, complete with hostile natives, various creepy-crawlies and dinosaurs, and of course one gigantic ape.

Jack and his companions, who include Hayes, Jimmy and Denham, the overzealous director, fight and puzzle-solve as a group. Interacting with computer-controlled companions is not the nightmare it could have been; on the contrary, the

experience is a very dynamic one thanks to the fact that dialogue and actions both occur on the fly instead of as momentum-breaking cutscenes. There's also no heads-up display by default; no map, no life gauges, no ammunition counter, and no unrealistic "depthless pockets" inventory.

Jack's items are limited to one firearm and whatever other object he can hold in one hand - a stick, bone shard or spear, for example. If Jack is injured to the point of death, the screen will turn red and his vision will blur.

Omitting numbers and other artifices, and requiring the player to navigate the primeval scariness of the environment using visual and aural cues alone, results in an experience that is dynamic, realistic and often extraordinary.

Aside from Jack's first-person scenarios, a handful of sequences give the player control of King Kong himself. There are a few fun acrobatic swinging and wall-running sequences, where Ubisoft is clearly invoking Prince of Persia, but the fighting and rampaging parts of the Kong experience aren't as fun as one might expect - owing to the fact that Kong controls, predictably, like a big, lumbering ape.

It's only with the very last scenes in New York, which serve little purpose, that the game seems to be merely be going through the motions until the inevitable film climax is reached. Otherwise, King Kong the game could easily stand on its own as an experience that doesn't need its film counterpart to prop it up.

By Erin Bell





# Kingdom of Paradise

## Kingdom of Paradise

**Publisher:** Sony Computer Entertainment

**Developer:** Climax Entertainment

**ESRB:** Teen **Rating:** 3 / 5 **Platform:** PlayStation Portable

Beefing up the PSP's scanty roster of role-playing games, Kingdom of Paradise is alternately absorbing and frustrating. The game is set in a feudal, obviously Japanese-inspired realm where various clans co-exist relatively peacefully thanks to a carefully maintained balance of power. When an evil force disrupts that balance, a young warrior named Shinbu finds himself caught up in the struggle to restore order.

While Kingdom of Paradise has the usual RPG trappings, including towns full of characters to interact with, companions that join and leave the group, various inventory items, character stats and experience points-based levelling, the most compelling aspect of the gameplay is the real-time combat system.

Over the course of the game, Shinbu can master various schools of swordplay by collecting technique scrolls from fallen opponents or finding them in chests. Each scroll contains a specific move in a series, which, when combined together on a master scroll of a particular school, will unleash a series of attacks. If Shinbu acquires special "Freestyle" scrolls, he can mix and match techniques from different schools to create his own distinctive style. Additionally, Shinbu can

use element-based "Chi arts" magical attacks, which can be learned by visiting various temples.

Kingdom of Paradise progresses in a linear fashion, which is fine except for the fact that advancing to the next part of the story often involves hunting down that one obscure person in town and talking to them in order to trigger the next bit of dialogue. Both the world map and "Shinbu's Notes", a journal designed to remind the player what to do next, are too vague, and as a result it's often unclear what to do next.

Unfortunately, the few seconds of load-time between each area mean that backtracking is even more of a drag than usual.

Die-hard role-playing gamers will have far more patience than the casual gamer to deal with Kingdom of Paradise's foibles. For the latter, the game might be better enjoyed with the help of a strategy guide.

By Erin Bell



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# Putting the "video" in videogame: Mobile video options in PSP, DS and GBA

## PSP options

Sony's PlayStation Portable displays video wonderfully and comes with a great video player application, however formatting the video files and getting them onto the PSP in the first place is the tricky part.

Simply dragging-and-dropping video files from your PC to the PSP's Memory Stick won't work, but thankfully, there are a number of downloadable software utilities out there that will help you to convert video files into the proper format and create the necessary subfolders on the PSP's Memory Stick. These include:

PSP Video 9 (free; [www.pspvideo9.com](http://www.pspvideo9.com))

PSPWare for Mac (US\$15; [www.nullriver.com/index/products/pspware](http://www.nullriver.com/index/products/pspware))

PSP Media Manager (US\$19.95; [www.sonymediasoftware.com](http://www.sonymediasoftware.com))

Xilisoft PSP Video Converter (US\$29; [www.xilisoft.com/psp-video-converter.html](http://www.xilisoft.com/psp-video-converter.html))

PSP Movie Creator (US\$34.95; [www.pqdvd.com/psp](http://www.pqdvd.com/psp))

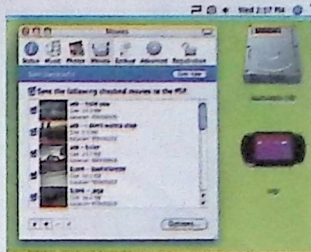
If you want to transfer video onto your PSP manually, you must follow these steps:

First, you'll have to create a directory in the root of the Memory Stick called "MP\_ROOT". Inside that folder, create a second folder called

"100MNV01" – this is the folder into which you'll need to drag all of your video files.

The PSP's video format is MPEG-4, so you'll need a software program that converts your video files (DivX, AVI, WMV and so on) to that format. Make sure to select widescreen format at a resolution of 480 x 720 pixels or lower. It's also recommended that the total bit rate of the file be no more than 768kbps (meaning, for example, 512kbps of video and 96kbps of audio to equal 768kbps total).

You'll also need to rename the files using the convention "M4VXXXXX.mp4", where X represents any number. For example,

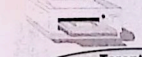


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"M4V00001.mp4", "M4V00002.mp4", and so on.

Once your video files have been converted to the proper format and size and the directories are in place on your Memory Stick, you can begin copying the videos onto the PSP. This can be achieved by either connecting the PSP to the computer via USB or inserting the Memory Stick Pro Duo into your PC's card reader and dragging the files into the "100MNV01" folder.

### Nintendo DS and GBA options

Video playback is not a built-in feature of any of Nintendo's handhelds, but it is possible to turn the Game Boy Advance and Nintendo DS into video players with the help of card reader peripherals that use the Game Boy Advance cartridge slot.

The GBA Movie Player ([www.movieadvance.com](http://www.movieadvance.com)) reads video off of Compact Flash cards that have been converted to GBM and GBS files using the included software. We found the player for around US\$30 at Lik-Sang ([www.lik-sang.com](http://www.lik-sang.com)).

Panasonic's Play-Yan reads MPEG-4 video files from SD cards, and has its own built-in hardware encoder for playback, so video quality is better than if the device's hardware was being used for playback.

The Play-Yan is unfortunately only available as a Japanese import. To find one, you'll either have to scour your local Asian import stores or order one from an import Web site (we found the Play-Yan on [www.play-asia.com](http://www.play-asia.com) for US\$70). The big downside to this (besides the logistics of actually getting the thing) is that you'll have to navigate Panasonic's included MediaStage video conversion software in Japanese. Good luck!



By Erin Bell

### Game Boy Advance Video

Majesco's Game Boy Advance Video series publishes various movies and television shows on traditional Game Boy Advance cartridges that are compatible with the original Game Boy Advance, GBA SP, Game Boy Micro and Nintendo DS. The library is decidedly kid-centric, with movies including Shark Tale and Shrek and a TV show collection rife with Saturday morning cartoon staples like Kim Possible, Johnny Bravo and SpongeBob SquarePants. The cartridges typically hold two to four episodes each, with running times ranging from 45 to 90 minutes.

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## Hit the Road: Keying into new PDA combophones

The era of the standalone personal digital assistant appears to be drawing to a close. New PDAs are designed not only to organize your life while you're on the run, but also to be able to connect with the other people in your life even when you're somewhere else.

While the combination of cellular phone and PDA seems to be the most common trend, there are still some cell-free models available, though it's getting pretty hard to find models that don't have WiFi or Bluetooth built in for connectivity. And for those who are constantly checking email on the go, the explosion of phones with built-in QWERTY keyboards is making it easier than ever to send quick replies.

Research In Motion's newest quad-band BlackBerry is known as the 8700, and it recently became available in Canada on Rogers' GPRS EDGE network. The 8700 takes a big step into multimedia, with the ability to send MMS messages and play MP3 ringtones. It also has a light-sensing screen that will automatically adjust for the ambient conditions. Despite the additional multimedia capabilities, the 8700 heads back to a design more familiar to long-term BlackBerry users, with individual QWERTY keys, some of which double as a numerical keypad for dialing. The memory on the 8700 is bumped up to 64MB, twice that on the recent 7100 model. As with the 7100, this one also has built-in Bluetooth. It's available with a

two-year Rogers service contract for \$550.

Another combo phone that's available on this side of the border is Hewlett-Packard's newest iPaq model, the HW6515. This quad-band phone also makes use of EDGE for faster data transfer, but also comes with integrated Bluetooth for connection to headsets and other accessories. It uses Microsoft's Windows Mobile 2003 operating system — not the newest mobile operating system from the software giant, unfortunately — which means the built-in 128MB of memory doesn't go quite as far; only 55MB of that are user-accessible. If you're jonesing for more memory, there are two expansion slots here: SecureDigital, and Mini-SD. Unlike the previous generation iPaq, this one omits the WiFi, but it does move the mini keyboard right onto the phone itself instead of making you clip it on. This one runs about \$800.

If you're waiting for Windows Mobile 5.0, there are a couple of new phones coming, but you'll have to wait until the new year.

Palm recently sent shockwaves through the PDA world when it announced that it was releasing a version of the Treo with Windows Mobile 5.0 instead of its trusty Palm OS. How could the company give up on Palm OS? Well, since the company's hardware and software divisions split apart, the hardware division has made the decision to try out another OS vendor. It will be interesting to see how well the two companies play together, having been fierce rivals in the PDA/cell combo space.

The first phone to hit the market south of the border will be a CDMA-based



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EV-DO model, which is capable of an average data transfer rate of 400 to 700 kbps. Palm bigwig Ed Colligan doesn't expect that a GPRS/EDGE model will be available until at least the second half of 2006; he's also quashed hopes for a Symbian-based model. Full product specifications — including an official name for the new product — still aren't available at the time of writing, but expect it to build on the same specs found in the Treo 650, including flash memory, MP3 player capability, Bluetooth and a built-in camera. My guess: it will have to have far more onboard memory to accommodate Windows.

Motorola's also gunning for the Windows Mobile 5.0 crowd with its forthcoming Moto Q combo phone. As with the forthcoming Treo, full specs aren't available yet, but it will feature Bluetooth, MP3 playback, and a built-in 1.3 megapixel camera. The design of the phone is meant to resemble the styling of the company's recent RAZR and SLVR models, but this one will be a bit wider to accommodate a QWERTY keyboard.

Another phone scheduled to hit the market in early 2006 is Nokia's E61, which uses Symbian OS 9.1 instead of Windows. The E61 is designed more as a mobile email device, with a mini-sized QWERTY keyboard and the ability to read popular attachments. The E61 will also feature WiFi and Bluetooth connectivity. Those looking for a different twist may want to check out the Nokia E70 instead, which looks like a regular cell phone until you flip up a panel, exposing a QWERTY keyboard that rests half on one side of the screen and half on the other. Again, the Symbian-based E70 will also feature WiFi and Bluetooth.

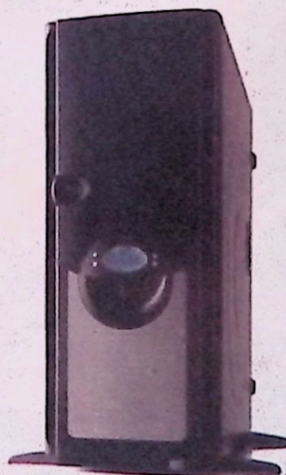
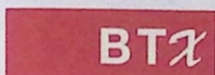
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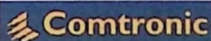


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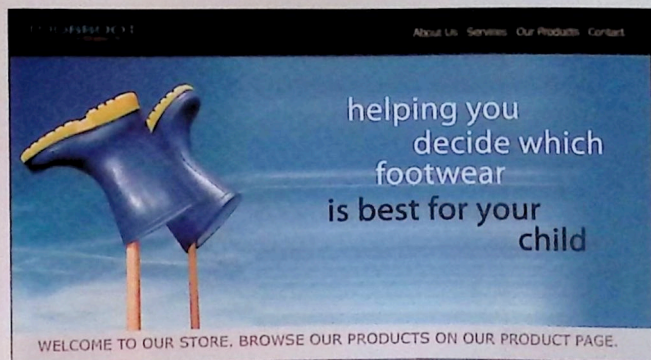


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# Giving Passwords the Finger

## Biometric password management

### Love, sex, secret, god.

According to the cultish film *Hackers* and the evil, skateboarding hacker cum network security chief cum cyber criminal, these are the four most commonly chosen passwords.

Amend them with a few random digits at the end and even the semi-savvy may think themselves protected.

It's been shown, however, that passwords based on dictionary words can be cracked with surprising – and frightening – speed.

The best security strategy is a multiple security strategy, says Rob Rice, chief technology officer of Zvetco, a company specializing in biometric solutions at the enterprise and SOHO level.

A combination of two or more of the following affords a reliable level of security, Rice says: Something you know (such as a not easily guessed or cracked password), something you have (like a USB security token or smartcard) and something you are, or some piece of identifiable biometric data like a facial or voice recognition, an iris scan or – in the case of our Test Lab – a finger print.

The biometric solutions profiled here range from the consumer-oriented convenience to the high-level enterprise and small or home office solution. Microsoft's Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader is an example of the former, and Zvetco Biometric's Verifi FingerTouch Security Professional fingerprint pod fills the latter category. APC's Biometric Password Manager falls somewhere in the middle, being aimed mostly at security-conscious consumers but with some of the heightened security features required by enterprise. For example, rather than take a surface "picture" of the portion of the finger that comes in contact with the sensor, the Password Manager scans beneath the first few layers of skin.

### Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader and mouse combo

It's a marriage of convenience. The Microsoft Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader doesn't offer the high-end security of the dedicated solutions profiled here. Ditto for the stand-alone reader pod (Microsoft Fingerprint Reader) that uses the same optical fingerprint-reading technology.

However, as a consumer convenience – once users go through the initial set up with frequently visited Web sites – it's a reasonable solution.

The documentation that users must agree to before installing the DigitalPersona password management software that comes with the hardware states itself that the device is designed to make computing



more convenient as opposed to securing user information.

It suggests that users trust it with passwords that aren't terribly sensitive such as a Web-based personal email login or a subscription login for online publications. It's more secure than the password fill-in utilities on popular Web browsers, but not as secure as some of the more dedicated security biometric devices.

The Microsoft solution uses an optical sensor that could be stymied by dirt or (in our test case) black permanent marker covering a registered fingerprint.

The major issue as a consumer solution is that Microsoft seems to have relied too heavily on Web design protocols in the device software. While a good number of login and password fields are recognized, requiring only that users scan their fingerprint and then input the login / password information in order to just scan a fingerprint for future access, there are a fair number of sites that aren't compatible with the device. For example, the fields in Google's personalized homepage login ([www.google.com/ig](http://www.google.com/ig)) aren't recognized.

Another strange issue is that while users can easily enter via the login screen of Windows XP, with support for multiple users, the floating login window that appears in certain versions after a certain period of inactivity doesn't recognize the fingerprint scan for login.

The fingerprint reader does however work with both Internet Explorer (6.0.2) and Mozilla Firefox (1.5) as tested.

### APC Biometric Password Manager

I had a heck of a time getting APC's Biometric Password Manager to recognize my fingerprints owing to deep ridges across the pads of my fingers.

It doesn't bode particularly well for computer users with dishpan hands

## Info Box

Microsoft Estimated price: \$50 [www.microsoft.com/hardware](http://www.microsoft.com/hardware)

### Pros:

- Low setup time on the desktop
- One-time USB setup required
- Numerous websites already add
- Hardware

### Cons:

- Optical scanner
- Doesn't interface with Windows XP
- Will be slower to be accepted
- Windows only

## Info Box

APC Biometric Password Manager Estimated price: \$50 [www.apc.com](http://www.apc.com)

### Pros:

- Some of the features of enterprise solutions at a consumer price point
- Simple and usable software
- Affordable

### Cons:

- Software, while usable, is depth management options
- Too many false rejections in our tests



... especially if said users didn't have dishpan hands when enrolling their fingers with the device. That said, though, a fingerprint completely blacked out with permanent marker didn't phase the sensor.

Once fingers and thumbs are registered (I was able to register two of the former and both of the latter) the APC software called OmniPass does a good job of recognizing site logins and other such personal information portals. A notifier will pop up when the software detects a login / password text field. However, it also seems to have difficulty with non-standard Web forms; Google's personal portal login and password fields weren't recognized.

While users can shut off the audio feedback or make the default voiced prompts to be strictly system beeps, the male voice that says "access granted" or "login verified" gets annoying after a very short while.

The APC solution incorporates some of the hardware that makes enterprise solutions secure, such as below the surface fingerprint scanning and a conductive scanning sensor that responds to the electrically conductive properties of living tissue (though to be fair, we didn't have a cadaver to properly check this claim, nor were we willing to sever a finger in the testing process) but its software is clearly designed to be a consumer convenience as opposed to a true security solution.

In much the same way Microsoft's Keyboard with Fingerprint Reader doesn't want to make itself accountable for the user's sensitive information, the APC Biometric Password Manager shies away from such responsibility.

After installing the APC solution's OmniPass software, a couple of items are added to Windows context menus that allow for easy encryption of files or folders, a nice touch.

However, the reader gave too many false negatives in our tests, refusing access to registered fingers several times before finger placement was just right. It became frustrating after a short while.

## Verifi FingerTouch Security Professional

Note: Zvetco Biometrics URL should be read "e-verify" as opposed to "ever-iffy," which would not exactly inspire the confidence the company might hope.

Zvetco's FingerTouch is actually the most full-featured of the biometric solutions tested as software goes. In addition to securely storing e-wallet information such as addresses, phone numbers and even credit card information, the Verifi ID software that ships with Zvetco's biometric pod can will recognize non-standard Web login forms as well as application logins with a little user intervention.

In addition, users can encrypt folders or a portion of a hard drive from 64KB up to 13GB in size. This space is then reserved for secured files and personal information. This portion of a drive is then accessed in the same way as any other drive, except that a biometric login is required to before

users can make changes.

Also, users can lock certain applications such that they require an identifier to run.

As biometric solutions go, Zvetco's is the most expensive of those tested. For enterprise level use, Zvetco offers a software development kit and can brand the product it offers with a company logo other than its own.

The FingerTouch and Verifi ID software do an excellent job of keeping data and accounts secure. In addition to cutting out physical intrusion possibilities — the sensor won't recognize non-living tissue, Rice tells us — with software and hardware integration. Users are further protected from physical intrusion such as data mining using a device that sits between the USB connector of the pod and the USB port of the computer. Each packet of data sent from PC to pod and vice-versa is digitally signed and any interference will result in packet rejection.

Because it reads beneath the first layer of skin, dirt and grime aren't an issue for the FingerTouch; a fingerprint completely blacked over with a permanent marker was recognized without delay.

## Conclusion:

Each of the solutions examined here has its place. The question of which one is best suited to a particular application comes down to two things. First, the cost factor; the APC and Microsoft solutions are relatively inexpensive but aren't well suited to the ultra security-conscious consumer desktop or enterprise applications. Zvetco's FingerTouch system satisfies the needs of the enterprise and the security conscious with fewer false negatives but would likely make too big a dent in the wallet for consumers.

The Zvetco solution is the one you'll find on our desktop from now on.

By Andrew Moore-Crispin

## Info Box

Vendor: Zvetco Biometrics | Estimated price: \$175 | [www.zvetco.com](http://www.zvetco.com)

### Pros:

- Unified management software
- Leading edge scanning technology
- Enterprise software development kit available

### Cons:

- Pricey
- Users can become too reliant on finger passwords and scan information





# Browser wars: The saga continues

## Internet Explorer

Current version: 6 SP2

[www.microsoft.com/windows/ie](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie)

### The Story

After emerging the victor of the "browser wars" of the 90s and squeezing out competitor Netscape, Internet Explorer has enjoyed near-total dominance as the Web browser of choice (which is hard to avoid when IE comes bundled by default with the Windows operating system.)

### Why use it?

Because Internet Explorer has been the industry standard for several years, most Web sites have been optimized for viewing in Internet Explorer and won't be displayed with all of their bells and whistles in other browsers.

Internet Explorer is even integrated with other parts of Windows such as Windows Explorer and the Add/Remove programs application. Therefore, it's a good default browser for novice Windows users (like your grandmother) who might be confused by having to switch to another browser and back for various applications.

### Why lose it?

Internet Explorer's security vulnerabilities are notorious. During 2005 alone, more than 50 security vulnerabilities were identified in IE 6 SP 2 by security advisory Web site SecurityFocus (<http://securityfocus.com>).

Most of IE's security headaches stem from ActiveX, an application that automatically downloads scripts when you visit a certain Web site. At their most benign, these scripts can enhance the Web site with animations, music, and so on. But unfortunately ActiveX can also auto-install malicious scripts like unwanted toolbars, adware and spyware.

Another criticism that has been levelled against IE is that it's lagging behind other browsers in usability due to it being based on the rather



outdated Trident rendering engine. Issues include a lack of complete support for Web standards like HTML and CSS, reduced support for PNG and JPEG formats, and failure to provide things like tabbed browsing and RSS integration.

Because IE is closed-source software and is tied to the Windows OS, it generally only receives major upgrades in conjunction with the release of a new operating system, and its capacity for customization and expandability is severely limited.

## Opera

Current version: 8.50

[www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)

### The Story

Founded and headquartered in Norway, the Opera Web browser began as a research project for Norwegian telecom company Telenor in 1994, and developed into a viable streamlined alternative to the increasingly bloated browser offerings from Netscape and Microsoft.

Opera pioneered tabbed browsing (opening multiple pages within one browser session) and is the first browser to offer voice-activated navigation using a headset and microphone (in English, for Windows 2000 and XP only).

Although older versions of Opera had banner ads, the latest version of Opera (8.50) is completely ad-free, and Opera has also waived the \$40 licensing fee to make it once again viable in comparison to other free browsers.

### Why use it?

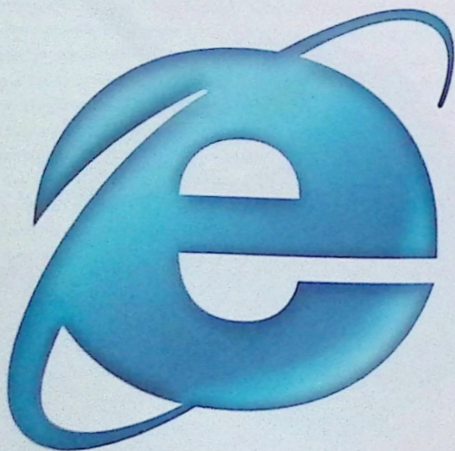
Opera claims to be the fastest browser on Earth – a claim that independent testing seems to support (check out [www.how-to-create.co.uk/browserSpeed.html](http://www.how-to-create.co.uk/browserSpeed.html) for a full comparison).

It's also small – 3.7MB to download as opposed to 35MB for Netscape, 52MB for Firefox, or 75MB for the full version of Internet Explorer.

Despite being streamlined, Opera's list of features is extensive and includes embedded RSS news feeds, pop-up blocker, integrated searching using Google, and extensive appearance customization options including more than 200 skins and adjustable toolbars. Security features include no ActiveX, automatic 128-bit encryption, and automatic deletion of cache and history upon exiting the browser.

### Why lose it?

Opera has more "out of the box" customizations than Firefox, but because Opera is a closed-source product it lacks the downloadable "extensions" that the Firefox community enjoys.





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## Netscape

Current version: 8.0.3.3

[www.netscape.com](http://www.netscape.com)

### The Story

Yes, Netscape is still around – and it's even making a comeback of sorts. After being pushed to the brink of oblivion by Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Netscape was acquired by AOL who promptly launched an anti-trust lawsuit against Microsoft. When the dust settled in 2003, AOL came away with a US\$750 million settlement and a licensing agreement to use Microsoft's Internet Explorer browsing technology royalty-free for seven years.

### Why use it?

Thanks to the licensing agreement with Microsoft, Netscape 8.0 is a dual-engine browser that is able to incorporate both Firefox's Gecko engine and Internet Explorer's Triton engine, giving users the option of viewing Web pages in either Firefox or IE.

In theory, people can use Firefox to visit the shadier neighbourhoods of the Internet where security might be an issue, and can switch to Internet Explorer for reputable sites that might not display properly in Firefox.

Other interesting features are "live content" – a list of constantly updated scrolling headlines in a browser toolbar, and the Multibar, a customizable tray that can contain shortcuts to up to 10 different expandable and customizable browser toolbars, such as RSS headlines and local weather.

### Why lose it?

The harmonization of Firefox and IE within the Netscape shell is a neat idea, but its execution isn't perfect. Some sites continue to default to Internet Explorer even if they pose security risks, whether the user wants IE to be the main browser or not. As well, Netscape is only compatible with certain Firefox extensions and not others.

The browser also suffers bloat from numerous AOL add-ons such as AOL mail, integrated AIM and ICQ instant messaging services, and AOL's U.S.-centric weather channel.

## Firefox

Current version 1.5

[www.mozilla.org/products/firefox](http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox)

### The story

This open source browser from the Mozilla Corporation caused quite a stir when it stole five per cent of Internet Explorer's market share less than a month after launching in 2004. It continues to chip away at Internet Explorer's virtual browser monopoly by providing strength in IE's two main areas of weakness: security and customization.

### Why use it?

Firefox's security features are one of its biggest attractions. Its pop-up blocker is referred to as the best in the industry, and it does not use ActiveX.

Other features include a built-in RSS reader, tabbed browsing, integrated search engine, and a download manager that lets you pause and resume downloads at will.

The Firefox browser is highly customizable with user-created add-on programs called "extensions". Common extensions include ad, image and flash blockers.

### Why lose it?

Many Web sites are still optimized for viewing on Internet Explorer, and although it's becoming rarer, certain Web sites may not run at all or offer drastically reduced usability with Firefox.

And while Firefox's security features are much-touted, they're still not perfect. Vulnerabilities still exist, and these will only become more numerous as Firefox's increased popularity brings it into the radar of more and more malicious coders.

Also, with the recent step up to version 1.5, the grass roots extension development community that helps to make the browser compelling has some catching up to do.

By Erin Bell





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